

INSPECTION REPORT

ALLENS CROFT NURSERY SCHOOL

KINGS HEATH

LEA area: BIRMINGHAM

Unique reference number: 103130

Headteacher: Mrs L. Mund

**Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett
1569**

Dates of inspection: Wednesday 28th – Friday 30th March 2001

Inspection number: 195039

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Allens Croft Road Kings Heath Birmingham
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Appropriate authority:	Birmingham
LEA officer:	Joyce Bevan
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

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			Mathematical development	How well are pupils taught?
			Knowledge and Understanding of the World	How well is the school led and managed?
			English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
OIN 11084	JANE HUGHES	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
OIN 11321	JUNE HUNTER	Team inspector	Physical development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Creative development	
			Personal, Social and Emotional development	
			Special educational needs	
			Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Allens Croft Nursery is an average sized nursery school situated in the Kings Heath area of Birmingham. There are 52 children, aged between three and four years old, of whom 21 are girls and 31 are boys. They all attend full time. The school is situated in the middle of a council estate and most children live in the immediate area. The housing around the school is being developed and there are high levels of deprivation within the local community. The children are taught by two teachers, including the headteacher, and two nursery nurses. They all work full time. In addition, a supply teacher is currently employed full time to provide additional classroom support and a support assistant works part time with children who have special educational needs. Almost half the children receive free school meals and forty two per cent have been identified as having special educational needs. This is a much higher figure than when the school was last inspected. A smaller percentage of children, twelve per cent, do not have English as their first language, with the majority speaking Urdu or Punjabi. A bilingual assistant is employed part time to work with them. Children's attainment on entry to school varies considerably but is below average overall. More children are arriving in school with delays in their language skills and in their personal, social and emotional development than previously.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Allens Croft is a very effective nursery school. It is very well led and the teaching is good. The majority of children are likely to achieve standards that are in line with national expectations in most areas of learning. They enjoy coming to school, work hard and their behaviour is good.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good
- Promotes very good relationships
- Children have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good
- Leadership and management by the headteacher are very good
- Maintains excellent links with parents
- Takes excellent care of the children
- Monitors the children's learning very effectively

What could be improved

- The way in which children's physical development outdoors is organised and taught
- Some children are given too much support

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, although more children are arriving in school with special educational needs. The quality of the teaching is better and systems for evaluating the work of the school have improved now that the headteacher monitors the teaching and learning. Planning of lessons is more detailed, activities set for

the children are more purposeful and they understand what is expected of them. Their levels of independence have improved because they are given more opportunities to improve these skills. However, more work still needs to be done in this area. The reduction in the number of activities on offer means that staff can focus on groups of children more effectively. The school is well placed to continue the good progress it has made so far.

STANDARDS

By the time children leave nursery the majority are making good progress towards achieving national standards, known as the Early Learning Goals which they are expected to reach at the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement because most children arrive in nursery with levels of attainment that are below average. Children who have special educational needs make good progress when their achievements are compared to what they managed previously. The smaller number who are learning English as an additional language make similarly good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to their learning. They are eager to participate in all activities and most persevere very well until they are finished.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children's behaviour is good. Adults have very high expectations of children and they respond accordingly. They are polite and are keen to help.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good throughout the school. Staff and children have obvious affection for each other and there is a very positive learning environment in the school. Children take any responsibilities seriously and carry out teachers' instructions carefully.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are good for a nursery setting and reflect parents' commitment to the school and children's eagerness to attend.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Three per cent of the teaching is excellent, eighteen per cent is very good and fifty three per cent is good. The remainder is satisfactory. The quality of teaching has been improved since the last inspection with a greater proportion of high quality lessons. Staff set high standards for the children and make sure that lessons are well organised by making good use of the resources available. They know the children's individual needs well and set the tasks at just the right level of difficulty, making sure that no ability groups are given work which is too easy. The quality of the teaching is consistently good across most areas of the curriculum but there are some weaknesses. Some learning opportunities are missed when children are given too much support or when too many are using a particular area.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy is successful. Staff use a very good range of strategies which meet the needs of nursery age children. A good example of this was seen when an adult began a session by practising counting rhymes then followed up the activity by encouraging children to apply what they had learnt about numbers in everyday situations. Children who have special educational needs are

well taught. Staff provide good opportunities for children to work towards the targets set for them within their individual plans. A similarly high standard of teaching is provided for children who are learning English as an additional language. Lessons are very well organised and staff ensure that all group members can get the full access to the nursery curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all the children. The planning is good. It is thoughtfully considered and provides children with a very good range of stimulating, challenging learning experiences. Appropriate emphasis is placed on improving literacy and numeracy skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. Children's individual needs are carefully assessed and planned for. Effective support and good teaching enable the children to achieve well. They make good progress when compared to what they had achieved previously.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The children make good progress and they are encouraged and supported by all the staff. The school makes sure that children experience the full curriculum range through very good deployment of the bilingual assistant.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision overall is made for children's personal development. Early experiences in the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are sensitively encouraged through interesting, well planned experiences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety, including child protection, are excellent. Staff are extremely conscientious in their duty of care. Adults know the children very well and the very good assessment of their progress ensures all children are offered just the right level of challenge within activities they undertake.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher and staff have created a very positive environment for children's learning and they work well as a team. The headteacher is very effective in her role, leads by example and has set a clear direction for the school. Monitoring of teaching and children's learning has improved and is now good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There is no governing body. The local authority supports the school through regular visits from its link adviser. It fulfils all its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good systems are in place which collect detailed information about the progress of individual children. The school has started to use this information to set itself targets for improvement which it then measures. Checks are also made on the progress made by each year group.

The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources. The school does not have a delegated budget but seeks out value for money when making spending decisions.
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Staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the children. Accommodation is adequate for the numbers of pupils on roll but the outdoor area is cramped when all the children use it together. Resources for learning are good and are well organised. This helps children to select equipment for themselves.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school and they behave very well. • Teaching is good. • The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed. • Self confidence and independence are encouraged. • Good support is offered to those children who are learning English as an additional language and to those who have special educational needs • Staff are approachable and friendly. Parents would feel confident about approaching the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No negative comments were received

The inspection findings confirm parents' very positive views about the school. Children enjoy coming and the quality of the teaching is good. High quality support is offered to all children and the school keeps parents well informed about their progress. It does this through regular feedback, written reports and parents' meetings. The school is most successful in this area and it has established a very good partnership with parents. They are overwhelmingly positive in their views on all aspects of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children arrive in nursery with a wide range of pre-school experiences. The majority enter with standards that are below average when compared to children of a similar age. This is particularly true in their personal, social and emotional development and in their linguistic skills. Standards on entry to school are lower than those found during the last inspection.
2. All children, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make significant gains in their learning. In all the areas of learning, children are well on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals which are the standards they are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good levels of achievement. These standards are similar to those found during the last inspection.
3. Improvements have come about because teachers' planning is more detailed and higher attainers are set work which is better matched to their particular needs. More emphasis is placed on checking how successful the teaching has been, assessing children's progress and then making changes where necessary.
4. The children's attainment in personal, social and emotional development is in line with the expected national standard. They make good progress in this area during their time in nursery. Children become confident and are eager to try new activities and experiences. They are friendly and speak readily to both adults and children. Some seek out their special friends and sit next to them at group time. All children behave well and understand the rules of the nursery. They work and play happily together, readily taking turns on the computers and sharing the moon boots and space clothes in the role play area fairly. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and work with a sense of purpose, handling equipment and materials with care. Courtesy and politeness are evident as children say "please" and "thank you" spontaneously at lunchtime. Here they make sensible choices, such as whether they would like custard or cream on their fruit, and some have the confidence to try new things to eat.
5. Improving children's language and literacy skills is given a very high priority within the nursery. Children are attentive and respond positively when asked to do something as, for example, when they pass on a message to another group or tell their friends to tidy up in the craft area. They gradually extend their vocabularies as a result of the well organised support they receive. For example, they are taught to retell a story they have heard and explain what features of the story they particularly enjoyed. Children like reading books and treat them properly, turning the pages carefully and making sure they are returned to the library area when they have finished with them. Some higher attainers make good attempts at writing their own names, while the majority are able to make marks on the invitations they have "written" for a party. Many are able to identify some of the letters from their name in words they find around the nursery.
6. Numeracy skills are developing well with most of the children able to count to ten and a few counting much higher than this. They are given regular opportunities to reinforce their skills in this area. A feature of their work is the way in which they can apply their knowledge in practical situations. An example of this was seen in the way one group of children was able to find different shapes in the nursery and then count how many times they could see them. Some have a good understanding of mathematical language and are happy to talk about position, shape, size and quantity.

7. Children are curious about the world around them and they take advantage of the many and varied experiences they are given. The majority are on course to meet the standards expected at the end of the Foundation Stage in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They observe what happens during simple experiments. For example, they notice what changes occur when they make holes with a pin in the “telescope” they have constructed. They use their imagination and knowledge of the world well in their painting and model making. Children enjoy using computers. Many know how to use the programmes independently, changing shapes and sizes using the mouse to control the screen.

8. Standards in physical development are in line with the expected national standard. Children are skilful at using tools such as pencils, paintbrushes and felt pens. All have a good awareness of space and others as they move around the nursery and when they dance to music in the hall. Children develop satisfactory co-ordination skills as they run up and down the terrace and pedal and steer tricycles along the painted routes. They balance along raised bars and climb with confidence on the climbing frame.

9. Standards in creative skills are in line with the expected national standard. Children explore and make good use of their imagination by using a variety of materials such as paint, clay, dough and collage. All play in the role-play areas with great enthusiasm, for example, as space people in “the rocket going to the moon.” They enjoy music, singing tunefully and with enthusiasm the well-known songs they are taught.

10. A large proportion of children have special educational needs. They learn at a good pace when compared to their previous attainment. Some of them have complex needs and they receive good support from the staff who work with them. They are given a wide range of interesting and challenging tasks which meet their individual needs and requirements. Children learning English as an additional language are making progress at a similar rate. Staff make very good provision for them by ensuring they are able to take part in the full curriculum range and that every chance is taken to practise their language skills.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development

11. Children have very good attitudes to learning and really look forward to coming to school. Most run in each day with eager anticipation and are quickly involved in an activity. They chat easily to staff about things that have happened at home or what they are looking forward to doing later. Children listen carefully to instructions from adults, settle quickly to tasks and generally persevere very well with a task until it is completed. They enjoy the interesting activities teachers plan for them and contribute very well to discussions about what they are learning. For instance, children in one group were intrigued to be set a task which involved camouflaging their ‘roamer’ computerised turtle into a type of alien illustrated in a story book. They chose a variety of papers, cards, pots and sticks and found different ways of sticking them on. At the same time, they concentrated really hard on the questions their teacher asked such as “How many eyes has the alien in the picture got? Which is the biggest?” They were able to answer all her questions sensibly and giggled at the weird sight of the roamer, now programmed by one of the group, as it made its way along the carpet. Several stayed afterwards to continue the fun.

12. Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school. Children understand the high expectations staff have of their behaviour and they respond well to the sensitive direction consistently given by adults. This helps them to make the most of their time at school, as they are able to concentrate on what they are doing without any distractions. Any occasional instances of boisterous behaviour are carefully managed by staff and there is no unacceptable behaviour such as bullying.

13. Children's personal development is very good; they become increasingly independent during their time at the nursery. They respond with eagerness when adults ask them to run errands such as taking papers to the office or returning resources to a particular member of staff. Adults encourage children to look after their own personal needs – they hang up their coats, go to the toilet and wash their hands efficiently. Tidy up time is signalled by music playing and children are quick to stop work and tidy the area they are allocated without fuss. When children arrive each morning, they self register by choosing their own name card from the pile. This idea is taken further as they also have to identify their own address and put the cards in the box. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions where children manage their cutlery well and enjoy eating with their friends and the lunchtime supervisors. At the last inspection, children were not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for selecting, setting out and tidying away resources. Now the children do this well as a matter of routine.

14. Relationships throughout the school are very good and make a significant contribution to the very positive and secure learning environment. The headteacher leads by example and fosters an extremely caring environment for children and their parents and they value this highly. Children are encouraged to treat one another with respect; they copy the very good example set by all members of staff. During the year, children make many friends at school and enjoy working alongside them both in the classrooms and outside in the playground. Children know that staff value their work and opinions and this helps to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem.

15. Levels of attendance are good for a nursery school. Most children are brought to school very regularly and on time by their parents. Sessions start promptly. Attendance has improved since the last inspection, partly because the school ran separate morning and afternoon sessions at that time rather than the all day provision it now offers.

16. Children's attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development have all improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good. Fifty three per cent of lessons were judged to be good, eighteen per cent very good and three per cent excellent. The remainder were satisfactory. This is a better picture than when the school was last inspected. On that occasion, five per cent of the teaching was found to be unsatisfactory and fewer good or better lessons were observed. It has improved for a number of reasons. Tasks set for the children are well organised and most of the planning is more detailed. For example, what teachers want children to learn is more clearly stated. Fewer activities are offered during the "free flow" sessions when children make their own choices about the work they will do. This makes it easier to focus on children's activities. Children of all attainment levels are well catered for. They learn faster because of this.

18. Staff are very reflective about their teaching, constantly rethinking how they will approach an activity. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and they are successful in introducing literacy and numeracy to nursery age children. For example, they use "Big Books" to share stories and start most sessions with simple number games or rhymes to reinforce children's learning in these areas. Most activities are well organised and the teaching caters for children of all levels of attainment. As a result children learn faster and sessions move at a brisk pace. An example of this was seen during a mathematical activity when children were asked to count to five, recognising the numbers and then adding and taking away. Some found the task very challenging at first and the teacher's attention focussed on these, offering advice and suggestions but making sure that each child was able to make a contribution. She then turned her attention to the higher attainers, asking them questions which made them think hard as they counted objects up to ten and beyond.

Good teaching such as this made sure that each group member had acquired new knowledge and could explain how their work could be improved.

19. Teachers set high standards in how they expect children to conduct themselves and the children respond accordingly by moving sensibly between activities, tidying up when asked to and completing tasks before moving on. This is an improvement from when the school was last inspected. Then inspectors found that too few opportunities were given for children to select or tidy resources.

20. Good quality teaching is found in most areas of children's learning. This degree of consistency improves children's learning opportunities because it means there is always a wide range of interesting and worthwhile activities available for them to choose from. It is only on a few occasions that the quality of the teaching does not meet these standards, although it is still satisfactory. Teaching for the outside area is not always successful because there are occasions when too many children are using a confined space. As a result, children get fewer chances to practise and improve their skills in physical development and this slows their progress. In some lessons, adults give children more support than they need, such as sticking pieces of paper for them, and also concentrate too much on the outcome of an activity rather than on improving children's language skills. On occasions such as these, some learning opportunities are missed.

21. Adults manage the children well. They insist on good standards of behaviour and children are very clear about these expectations as they are constantly reinforced throughout the school day. A few children demonstrate boisterous behaviour but staff manage them extremely well. They make sure that they do not affect the learning of others. Very good relationships are apparent and children feel confident and secure within a well ordered learning environment.

22. A particular strength is the good use that staff make of available resources to support their teaching. For example, information and communications technology is used very effectively by teachers to improve the curriculum much more effectively than when the school was last inspected. Software is carefully selected which supports the topics that are being covered and staff are more confident. A good example of this was seen when a group of bilingual children used an interactive programme to share a story. Using the computer allowed the children to follow the story in words and pictures with an accompanying commentary. It kept them interested throughout the activity and the bilingual assistant working with them ensured that the activity moved at a brisk pace and that the questions they were asked matched their levels of attainment. As a result of such good teaching, children's vocabulary increased as well as their confidence and self esteem.

23. Children who have special educational needs are also well taught. They each have a detailed plan which sets out targets for them to work towards. All staff utilise these plans when organising activities and skilfully ensure that no one is left out. They set tasks which build children's confidence and encourage them to take on new challenges. For example, during a language activity, one boy found difficulty in expressing what he wanted to say. The adult working with him showed great patience and supported his attempts to find the right word. She offered ideas and suggestions but did not offer a solution. The boy knew that his contribution was being valued and persevered until he managed to convey his views.

24. Staff made very good use of links with parents to support and extend children's learning. Some parents help in school on a regular basis and staff work closely with any parent who has specific concerns. "Learning stories" describe how children have acquired new knowledge in different curriculum areas and these are shared with parents. They are displayed in the entrance area so that parents who are unable to spend time in school can still see the range of learning opportunities that are on offer. The excellent relationships with parents help children to consolidate their learning at home.

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

25. The school has a well balanced curriculum. It provides a very good range of stimulating, practical activities both indoors and out which meets the needs of all the children.

26. The school has made good progress in addressing the curriculum issues raised by the previous inspection and has maintained the strengths identified at that time.

27. Curriculum planning is good. Following the last inspection, the school has reviewed all stages of curriculum planning and now bases topics for development on the children's current interests. These are linked to the Early Learning Goals which are the national standards children are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. For example, a visit to King's Heath Park stimulated a discussion of what had interested them. Their ideas formed the outline for the curriculum planning for the term. The current successful space topic stems from the children's enthusiasm when climbing on a space rocket climbing frame at the park.

28. The school has very effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. All activities are well planned to engage the interests of the children and to challenge them to use their knowledge and skills to extend their learning. For example, children playing in the Space Station in the role play area counted down from five to one before blast off and then wrote invitations to others to come and join them in space. Learning activities are well grounded on detailed information about each child. The school regularly assesses what children know, understand and can do, and uses this information to plan future work at the right level. Staff take great care to ensure that the needs of all the children are taken into account when they plan activities. For example, more able children were asked to count down from ten to one when playing in the role play area.

29. The school takes considerable care over how the learning activities are presented to the children. The learning areas are well organised and well equipped with suitable resources and learning materials. Following the last inspection report, the number of activities available to children at any one time has been reduced. Adults now make sure that all children working at activities have opportunities to extend their learning and make good progress.

30. Frequent opportunities are provided throughout the day for all children to make choices, take decisions and develop as independent learners. Both boys and girls are treated as individuals and care is taken to make sure that they become fully involved. For example, children are regularly monitored as they move around the activities so that their involvement and progress in all areas is recorded. This careful recording ensures that the children benefit from all activities, being guided by an adult to any areas they have missed.

31. Good provision is made for all the children with special educational needs. Some children's special needs are already identified before they start at the nursery through the very good links the school has developed with local agencies. Adults know the children well and any giving cause for concern are quickly identified. Appropriate work is planned for them and the sensitive support the children receive ensures they can all take part in their chosen activities and have equal opportunities in all aspects of the curriculum. The children's progress is regularly reviewed and they all make good progress towards the targets set in their individual educational plans.

32. The provision for children learning English as an additional language is very good. Staff are very aware of the differing needs of the children in gaining confidence to communicate. These children are

very well supported and sufficient time is given to talking to them or explaining instructions carefully. All children have clear, individual targets for their learning.

33. Educational visits and a wide range of visitors make a very good contribution to children's learning. Recent visitors include a school girl who brought her violin to play for the children, a local shopkeeper who brought her price gun for the children to use and an artist who came to show the children how to make models using clay. All these visitors and experiences broadened and enriched the children's learning.

34. The school is successful in establishing good links with partner schools and colleges. Links with other nurseries and reception classes are also good. Through shared courses, colleagues meet together to improve and develop their work with young children. Links with the schools to which the children transfer are good. The links with the neighbouring school, for example, are well established. Nursery children use the school hall regularly for physical development and music and movement lessons. They are frequently invited to watch the reception class assemblies.

35. Overall, the school makes very good provision for children's personal development. Provision for children's spiritual development is good. The nursery environment is a place where awe and wonder is a natural feature of every day. For example, children watching a mobile they had made from metal objects, were given time to listen in wonder as the wind caught it and a tinkling sound was heard. Opportunities are provided for the children to reflect quietly before lunch when they close their eyes and say a prayer.

36. The provision for children's moral and social development is very good. The school is successful in helping the children understand the difference between right and wrong. Most children's behaviour is good. Adults teach the children to behave with self control, to be tolerant, courteous and have good manners. They work happily in pairs, groups or with their special friends. They listen well to each other, respecting what others have to say. Children are given responsibilities, such as choosing an activity inside or outdoors, organising when to have their snack, registering themselves and being responsible for their coats and hats. All are willing to tell others when it is time to clear the activities away before lunch.

37. The provision for children's cultural development is good. The school successfully teaches the children to appreciate their own and other cultural traditions. Children are provided with a good range of cultural experiences. They have opportunities to learn and participate in traditional songs and ring games, such as 'The Farmer's in his Den'. Respect for and the valuing of other cultures is introduced through the celebrations of festivals and special days. Children celebrate the Chinese New Year, Divali, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day and Easter. Visitors and parents wearing traditional dress are invited into school to help children to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures. There is a wide range of musical instruments from other cultures, as well as dual language books and other resources to support this provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Standards of pastoral care are impressive. The headteacher and staff have established excellent procedures to ensure the well being of each child. Very good procedures are in place to monitor children's academic progress, educational and personal development.

39. The school is careful to address all issues of health and safety very effectively. Regular risk assessments take place and first aid provision is monitored and recorded. All staff are aware of their role in the case of an emergency evacuation of the building and the school practises this regularly.

Children with allergies or those unable to eat certain foods because of their religious beliefs are looked after extremely well by the full time staff and lunchtime supervisors who are given up to date information and photographs of all the children concerned.

40. The headteacher is designated responsible for child protection; in her absence there is a clear chain of responsibility. The school has extremely clear guidance for staff to follow on child protection procedures and all adults are very conscientious in their duty of care. During the inspection, inspectors saw incidents pertaining to child protection considered with great sensitivity and care for the children and their parents. On occasions, parents consider the school to be a refuge and often turn to staff for support, advice and help.

41. The school is rigorous in its monitoring of children's attendance and ensures parents are contacted quickly if they do not bring their children to school. Consequently, there is little unexplained absence. Registers are accurately completed and are checked several times during the day to ensure they are correct. Most parents contact the school about any reasons for absence. The school promotes good attendance with parents before their children start school and regularly throughout their association with the nursery.

42. All adults in the school maintain consistently high expectations for the standards of children's behaviour. Children are involved in drawing up behaviour rules with their key workers and these are displayed in the corridor. Lunchtime supervisors and teachers work well together and the high standards expected of children during class activities are maintained at dinnertime. The school functions as an extremely orderly and calm environment and this helps children to make the most of their time in school. No incidents of harassment or bullying were seen during the inspection.

43. Methods of checking children's achievements are very good and the information collected about each child is used very effectively to ensure activities are both challenging and interesting. All adults contribute to each child's individual profile. Particularly noteworthy is the system of "Children of the Day" where several children are targeted for specific assessment by staff. During the day, staff make notes of relevant activities, achievements and interactions shared with these children; these observations are pooled. At the end of the day, all staff meet to share this information and the completed notes are given to the relevant key worker to add to the rest of the assessment information she holds on that particular child. Detailed discussions about a child's performance often follow and it is clear that the staff work very effectively together in this way. Appropriate targets are set for each child and staff all know what their expectations are for each of the children in their group. Consequently, children make good progress as teachers always have high expectations of their capabilities. Assessments made by visiting specialists are well documented and are kept with all the other information. Exemplars of particularly good efforts by the children are compiled in individual profile books that are given to parents when their children leave the school. Children with special educational needs and those children who are only just beginning to speak English as it is not their mother tongue are very well supported by specialist staff.

44. Similarly, there are very good procedures in place to monitor and support children's personal development. Staff are quick to encourage children to try new things and praise them when they manage something new; this increases their self-esteem. All adults are committed to improve children's personal, social and emotional development.

45. Standards of pastoral care have further improved from the good quality seen at the time of the last inspection. Monitoring and promotion of children's academic achievements has also improved considerably. This is now a very strong feature of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents are fulsome in their praise of the headteacher and staff; they are overwhelmingly positive about the provision made for their children as was evident at the parents' meeting, in responses to the questionnaire and in discussions during the inspection week. Unusually, no negative comments at all were made at any of these times. The school should be proud of the value parents place on its work.

47. The school maintains very good links with parents and carers and they feel very well informed about what the school is trying to provide and how well their child is progressing. Regular newsletters provide a good overview of school life. A particularly useful feature of these is the summary back page that highlights the previous month's area of learning. Parents are able to read a simple summary of all the things the children have studied in a particular area - knowledge and understanding of the world, for example. This provides parents with a clear picture of what their children have done and gives them a focus on which to concentrate at home. A particularly valuable feature provided for parents is the "Settling In Report" which key workers complete for the first few days of each child's time at nursery. This tells parents what their child had for lunch, with whom they played and for how long they may stay the following day. Parents can also comment on the sheet. This is a very useful link with parents and sets the friendly tone for future relationships between home and school.

48. The school's prospectus is easy to understand and provides a clear overview of the school's approach and philosophy. The school constantly encourages parents to come in to help and a small number do so regularly. The headteacher is sensitive to the fact that not all parents are equally confident about working alongside children in the classrooms. Parents fulfil a number of office based tasks and several accompany children on visits outside school. Recently, parents helped to redecorate the school, remounted displays of children's work, stencilled patterns on walls and cleaned out the fish tank. Such involvement gives them a greater sense of partnership with the school and builds on the very close relationships established with parents in the Early Years Centre behind the school. Here the headteacher has established crèche and pre-school sessions, Stay and Play drop-ins, baby groups and parent education workshops. These are all very popular and activities are linked to the Early Learning Goals children study in nursery.

49. Very clear information is provided for parents about the progress children make. Much day-to-day information is shared when children are collected at the end of the day and staff are careful to point out any areas of success or concern. More formal opportunities are organised during the year for parents to sit with staff and discuss how their children are progressing. The individual profiles compiled by the school are extremely well produced and give parents a very clear picture of the progress their children make over the year. The comprehensive "Learning Stories" are a good example of this. They are written about each child during a set period and reproduced with a digital photograph of the child involved in a task. A clear explanation below explains what it was the child was learning as a result of the play activity. These are displayed for parents to see and are transferred later to children's profiles.

50. The headteacher is very proactive in her attempts to involve parents in their children's learning. She has a very clear understanding of the family backgrounds of the children as the majority have attended sessions at the Early Years Centre. She is very resourceful in the ways she tries to encourage parents to take an interest in the school and their children's education. Great efforts have been made to involve parents from very early on – even prenatally, by making it possible to use the crèche facilities and Stay and Play schemes in the Early Years Centre. As these parents now move through with their children to the nursery, they know the headteacher and staff well and are more

likely to feel comfortable in the school environment. A number of workshops are run for parents to help them understand more clearly the Foundation Stage curriculum.

51. There is also a clear expectation from the headteacher that every family will send one adult representative to three workshops per year that have particular relevance to their children. The first of these is run by the local health visitor and gives a good introduction to a variety of health and care related issues.

52. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning. They are regular visitors to the book and toy libraries and are particularly supportive of the new Top Tots and mathematics bag projects run by the school. These offer children the chance to take packs home at various times and for parents to support their physical or academic development at home through packs of practical activities. Children are very keen to take the packs home. One little girl was eager to tell inspectors that it was her turn for a Top Tots bag. She opened it and enthusiastically explained about the table tennis bat and ball inside, along with the simple instruction sheet for her parents to read.

53. Parents' views are even more positive than at the time of the previous inspection. Parents have a better understanding of what their children are doing at school and are more involved with their children's learning at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has responded well to the weaknesses identified when the school was last inspected and introduced the necessary changes. She is a strong and effective leader who provides a clear educational direction. She is well supported by the teacher who has a responsibility allowance. She who works closely with her, taking responsibility for significant areas such as improving assessment strategies. There is a very positive ethos within the school that is geared towards improving standards and providing good educational opportunities for the children. Both the headteacher and the allowance holder are very good teachers and they set the standards for other staff. Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the school's future direction and this results in a strong sense of teamwork where nursery nurses are viewed as valued partners. An example of this is seen in the way in which everyone contributes to decisions on the school's current priorities. These are then summarised in the school development plan. This is a very good document which provides a detailed picture of how the school will progress in the future. It sets out targets for improvement over a suitable timescale and has close links with finance with priorities carefully costed.

55. The school's aims and values are regularly reviewed and can be seen in its life and work. Good examples of these aims, seen in practice, are the way in which staff and children show such great care and consideration for one another. Children as a matter of course say, "excuse me " as they pass and show great concern if any of their classmates are upset.

56. The school has no governing body and the local education authority has overall responsibility. It fulfils all its statutory responsibilities and a local authority link adviser visits regularly to provide support and follow up any concerns raised by the headteacher.

57. Very good progress has been made in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This area was described as being at an early stage of development at the time of the last inspection. The school now keeps a very close check on the progress that children make and sets clear targets for areas that it wishes to improve. For example, greater involvement for children in the mathematical area of learning was regarded as a priority following an audit of what children were doing. Inspection evidence confirmed that successful strategies had been introduced which enabled this to happen. Monitoring of

teaching and children's learning is also better. All staff are part of the ongoing programme and changes, and they receive regular feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching.

58. Communication systems within the school are very good. It works hard to respond to local needs, consulting parents, listening to their views and responding to suggestions. An example of this is the way in which the Early Years Centre attached to the school has evolved in recent years, providing a much greater range of services in response to local needs. The headteacher has been instrumental in developing the Centre and training the staff. The school operates very efficiently with responsibility for the administration shared between the school secretary and the headteacher. The school does not have a delegated budget and most financial resources are allocated by the local authority. Nevertheless, it makes very good use of information and communication technology systems to order goods and equipment and then monitor expenditure.

59. There are suitable numbers of well qualified and experienced staff to teach the children. Funds allocated to special needs are well used. Children receive good levels of support that allows them to access the full curriculum range. Similarly, children learning English as an additional language are equally well supported with funds for this area used to provide additional staff. The inspection found that staff working with these groups of children focused accurately on their specific needs and made sure that they were working successfully towards the targets set for them.

60. The headteacher is very successful in attracting additional funds to the school. She is imaginative and resourceful in this role and, as a result, the school benefits considerably. Examples of this are the courses and workshops offered by the school, the headteacher's role as a mentor for the local area and the extension of the school's work in the adjoining Early Years Centre. Resources are good for most areas of learning. They are well used and thoughtfully organised so that children can choose for themselves, helping them to become more independent. Accommodation, both indoors and out, is adequate but the outside area becomes congested during lunchtimes and when large numbers of pupils choose to play outside during lessons. This can then affect the pace of their learning as, for example, they have to wait for others to move out of their way or wait to use some of the equipment. The school works hard to improve the learning environment through displays that celebrate children's work and achievements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve the organisation and teaching of physical development outdoors by:
 - Reducing the number of children using the outside area during teaching sessions
 - Ensuring that adults working with children focus on improving their skills

- (2) Ensure that children are given every opportunity to learn and become independent by:
 - Checking that adults do not provide too much support
 - Offering good opportunities to discuss and extend children's language skills during all the activities, particularly during craft construction

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	18	53	26	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)	52
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	23

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	22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Financial information

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	2.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	154382
Total expenditure	154382
Expenditure per pupil	2969
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	52
Number of questionnaires returned	14

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	14			
My child is making good progress in school.	86	14			
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	50			
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	50			
The teaching is good.	86	14			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	29			
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	21			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	57			
The school works closely with parents.	71	29			
The school is well led and managed.	86	14			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	29			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	21			21

Parental comments:

- ❖ Staff take an interest in each child as an individual
- ❖ They help to boost children's confidence
- ❖ Children like school and the activities provided
- ❖ The school involves parents very well
- ❖ Children make really good progress
- ❖ The teachers are excellent

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, Social and Emotional Development

61. Attainment for the vast majority of children in personal, social and emotional development is likely to reach the level expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is an area in which the teaching and development of skills are given a very high priority. The staff's high expectations ensure that children of all abilities make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs also make good progress. This is due to the good support they receive from adults within the nursery.

62. Adults set good examples and constantly reinforce good work habits. Children develop positive attitudes to their learning and they persevere and concentrate on their work. When they complete one activity they start the next one without being directed by an adult. All staff encourage children to accept responsibility for nursery tasks and children quickly learn to be independent. For example, they put on aprons before playing in the water tray and spontaneously try to wipe up the floor when it gets wet. All children help to tidy up at the end of activities and some are quickly aware of those who need help to complete the task. A child brushing up the sand, for example, was helped by a friend who held the dustpan. All children are taught to be responsible for their own shoes when taking part in the music and movement lesson and their coats when going outside. Most are adept at helping themselves and others. Very well established routines ensure few need help with the toilet or to wash their hands. Lunch times are pleasant occasions and are used well to support children's independence. Children make choices of what they will eat, make conversation with adults and their friends and behave appropriately at the table.

63. Children understand the rules of the nursery and keep to them. They know that they must start the sand timer, for example, to mark the length of their turn on the computer and then give others a fair turn. All adults in the nursery set high expectations of good behaviour and the children respond well. On a rare occasion when two boys had a disagreement about a clay model, the adult quickly intervened and sensitively showed them positive ways of resolving the dispute. Both children listened well and told each other how upset they were, said they were sorry and promised each other that they would not do it again. Overall, the children's behaviour throughout the nursery is good.

64. Adults encourage children to be courteous and polite to everyone in the nursery. Most say "please" and "thank you" readily and others say "sorry" spontaneously if they accidentally knock against a visitor.

65. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development was good in over half of the lessons seen and the rest was very good. The teachers and all staff are skilled at establishing very effective relationships with the children. As a result of this, children are happy and self-assured as they move around the nursery. They understand the routines and they are confident to select activities, approach adults to ask for help or share an idea or a piece of work with them. All use equipment and resources with great care remembering, for example, to replace the musical instruments back in the storage boxes when they have finished playing them.

66. Careful assessments note children's progress so individual needs for support are not overlooked. Work covered in this area of learning makes a strong contribution to the children's success in their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Communication, Language and Literacy

67. Children's attainment in language and literacy is on line to reach the standard expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement because many of the children start nursery with limited language development. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection but there are more children in the school who have special educational needs.

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

69. Children listen well. At the beginning of each session they meet to talk about what they will be doing next. They listen attentively to their classmates' contributions or to the instructions that they have been given. Their ability to listen for long periods and then respond sensibly is particularly impressive. When they come together on such occasions these skills are reinforced and practised. For example, one group listened carefully to the story of the "Tortoise and the Hare". The adult working with them made good use of information and communications technology (ICT) to keep their attention. The story was animated and the children listened to the commentary about a hedgehog told by their teacher. Each member of their group was able to make a contribution which was valued. The adult asked questions that were skilfully matched to the individual needs of the group members. This meant that everyone could be successful but none found the tasks too hard or too easy.

70. Despite many of the children arriving in school with low levels of language development, most try to express themselves and they enjoy taking an active part in imaginative play. This increases their spoken language skills. For example, some children played in a "Space Ship" which was organised in such a way that they could develop the topic about space and aliens that they had been discussing throughout the week. They sustained their play for a long time, involved each member of their group, shared resources and took turns. Their language skills improved on these occasions because the adult working with them was able offer good ideas on how their role play might develop. She also made sure the activities stayed purposeful and built in valuable links with other curriculum areas. An example of this was the way in which children discussed how many people could safely be added to their space craft before it became unsafe and what might happen if too many came on board before take off.

71. Children are confident when they use books and they know how to handle them carefully. Many will choose books spontaneously and take them into the library area to read. An adult is often based in the library area who sits with children while they "read" and helps them to enjoy books. This is a particular feature of the school and children are encouraged to enjoy and value books. They understand that words and pictures convey a meaning. Most children can recognise their own names and select their name cards when they arrive for each session. Many can identify some of the letters of their name in writing and displays around the nursery and can talk about books they have enjoyed listening to and retell their favourite stories.

72. Most children's writing skills are at a very early stage of development. Nevertheless, they are confident enough to make attempts at writing their own names unaided and a small number manage to do this when ever they complete a piece of work. Writing features across the curriculum and children are keen to talk about their writing in their imaginative play and when they use the well equipped writing table.

73. Children respond well to the lessons and they concentrate well. Most stay on a task until it has been completed and there are few times when they "flit" between activities. This contributes to the standards they achieve. Children make good progress in their learning. This is because staff

encourage them, expect a lot of them and constantly ask them to think about other words they might use. They know the children well and set them work which is at the right level and suitably demanding. Children are able to follow their own interests but staff organise their work in such a way that children build on what they already know and they have regular opportunities to consolidate their learning.

74. Children who are identified as having special educational needs receive a very good level of skilled, adult support. They have detailed programmes of work which give them the opportunity to make consistently good progress. They enjoy their work because staff make it interesting and children experience success in what they do. An example of this was seen with a boy who has learning difficulties. He found it hard to communicate and has a short attention span but the adult working with him kept him actively involved in an extensive range of interesting tasks. His successes were celebrated by both the adults and classmates at the end of the session when he was asked to stand up in front of his classmates who clapped. This helps to build his confidence within a secure environment where his contribution is valued.

75. The smaller number of children who are learning English as an additional language are also very well supported. They receive regular help to ensure they can take a full and active part in the whole curriculum that the school offers. For example, dual language books are used to very good effect to ensure that their learning opportunities are not diminished in any way. Their language development improves as a result of this.

76. The quality of the teaching is good overall. Thirteen per cent of lessons observed were excellent, fifty per cent very good or good with the remainder satisfactory. The quality of teaching is better than when the school was last inspected. On that occasion, fewer lessons were judged to be very good or better. Teachers' planning has improved. It sets out more clearly what the teacher expects children to achieve during an activity and the number of activities planned has reduced. This was a weakness last time when there were too many happening at once. The best lessons are characterised by all group members being stimulated and everyone making good gains in their learning. This was seen during a story session when a teacher and bilingual assistant combined to read a story in English and Urdu. This meant that everyone was catered for at their own level. The adults asked the questions in such a way that those in the group with a poorer understanding of English were not inhibited in any way. They stayed confident and were happy to make a contribution at their own level. Children who were already confident users of English were asked more complex questions and were expected to respond by using suitable words in the correct order. As a result of such good teaching, children made rapid progress and learned quickly.

77. Teachers also keep a better check on what children have learned and use this information well to organise what comes next.

78. Not all the teaching was as good as this, although none seen was judged to be unsatisfactory. In the more ordinary lessons, some children are given too much help with the adult writing their names on their work instead of encouraging them to write their names themselves. This limits their independence and slows their rate of learning.

Mathematical Development

79. Overall, children make good progress and most are on course to meet the expected standard by the time they reach the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement because many children arrive in nursery with attainment levels that are below average. Staff concentrate on making sure children learn to count and recognise figures and include many opportunities within the topics they choose.

They are successful because they practise these skills regularly, helping children to consolidate what they have just learned.

80. Many of the children can count to ten and a few can count higher than this. They use their knowledge of number rhymes and counting games to reinforce this learning. The school has been successful in introducing elements of the national numeracy strategy, such as regular mental arithmetic sessions. This was well illustrated during an activity with a teacher when children were recognising numerals to five using a chart to display the numbers and the “aliens” they were counting. Most knew what would happen when one extra was added or when one was taken away. They could count accurately and then recognise the figures that the adult wrote. Some higher attainers were able to work out simple sums, using these same figures, and then apply their knowledge to other calculations such as how many children were in their group.

81. Children are good at using simple mathematical language when they talk about distances such as near and far. They learn about shapes and many are able to sort objects and put them in order using colour or shape to separate them. They use ICT successfully to improve their knowledge of shape as, for example, when they use a programmable toy called a roamer to draw shapes such as squares. Children are good at making comparisons and can recognise bigger and smaller objects around the nursery. They can also identify shapes and patterns around them. Working with their teacher, one group produced a booklet which contained pictures of shapes they knew alongside objects they found within the immediate locality. One example they found was the rectangular shapes of the windows in the telephone box.

82. Children learn well and they make good progress in their mathematics. Those who are identified as having special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make particularly good progress. This is because they receive a high level of skilled support and most achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans. Their work is very closely monitored and adapted to their needs when necessary. Individual records are very detailed and much better than when the school was last inspected. These indicate that the progress children make is consistently good throughout their time in nursery.

83. Most children behave well and are keen to succeed. They work together, sharing and taking turns when necessary. When they are required to work together to complete their tasks they do so sensibly. Their keenness and cooperation are significant factors in helping them to make gains in their learning.

84. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good in twenty per cent of lessons and good in the rest. In the most successful lessons, adults make good links with other activities, such as role play in the imaginative area. This was set up as a space ship and children could practice counting down ready for “take off”. The adult introduced mathematical language slowly and sensitively making sure each group member was able to answer questions at their own level. Children were confident enough to take a risk even if they were not sure of the answer because they knew their group leader was always supportive and encouraging.

85. Planning is better than when the school was last inspected now that clear objectives are set for each lesson. Staff regularly monitor how effective their teaching has been by checking on what children have learnt by the end of an activity. This enables them to plan the next phase of work more accurately and to keep children’s learning purposeful.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

86. The majority of children are on course to reach the expected standard by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. They are provided with many good opportunities for learning through well organised classroom activities. They respond well to these. Standards are similar to those found during the last inspection.

87. Children are beginning to understand simple scientific processes. They learn to observe carefully and describe accurately what they see. For example, in one activity they planted their own seeds in individual pots and discussed what might happen to them. They checked them each day to see what was happening. Many were able to predict what might happen to them if they were left without water or light and talked confidently about ways they could record what they had seen.

88. Most children can select construction materials sensibly and safely. They are good at planning what they want to make and know how different materials can be joined, showing good manipulative skills. A good example of this was seen when a small group of children worked with an adult making wind chimes. They joined the chimes, made from forks and spoons with holes drilled in them, using a hammer and nails. They could all explain what they wanted to achieve and knew what they needed to do to keep themselves safe.

89. Children are very keen to talk about their family and friends and this is a very positive feature of children's work in this area. One boy talked excitedly about his brother's party that he was helping to plan and his classmates all contributed to the conversation, describing their own families. Many children can recognise features of their local area and know parts of their address. Their work in this area is particularly effective as they are introduced to simple maps which show where they live. Many can describe their journeys to school. Another positive feature is the way in which they are developing an understanding about their own and other people's cultures and beliefs. An example of this is the way that festivals such as Christmas, Chinese New Year and Eid are celebrated.

90. Children's behaviour is good and this has a positive effect on the quality of what they achieve. It is evident in the way they share tools and materials and take turns with equipment. They are comfortable with the routines of the nursery and are keen to talk about their activities with adults.

91. Children are now confident in their use of information and communication technology. When working on the computer, they know that moving the mouse will make changes on the screen and many show good levels of competence in selecting from different options.

92. All children are making good progress in this curriculum area. This is due to the exciting and interesting range of lessons they are offered, which have clear learning objectives and are adapted to meet the needs of individual children.

93. A quarter of the teaching in this area is very good, a half is good with the remainder satisfactory. Staff set up activities which are interesting and keep children involved for long periods. As a result they learn more quickly and are able to consolidate their learning through a series of related experiences. A good example of this was seen as a group of children "built" a spaceship using wooden blocks. They knew what they wanted to achieve because they had planned their work with an adult who worked with them. They tried a series a blocks before settling on the ones that would provide the most secure foundations. The adult supported their discussions well, suggesting possible solutions but insisted that the children made the decisions themselves.

94. In the more ordinary lessons, some learning opportunities were missed. During a craft activity, a group of children were building models. The adult working with them concentrated on completing the

task and gave children few opportunities to discuss what they were doing or look for alternative approaches.

Physical Development

95. Children are on course to meet the expected standards by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage.

96. They are given a wide range of activities indoors to develop their physical skills. There are many opportunities throughout the day to develop their manipulative skills. For example, they use pencils, brushes, scissors and tools confidently to make mobiles for outdoors. Children roll and kneed both dough and clay and complete a variety of jigsaws with dexterity. Many children develop sufficient skill to control the cursor on the computers, activating objects around the screen. As a result, most children, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress in this area.

97. The teaching to promote physical skill development was good in over half the lessons and satisfactory in the rest.

98. The good teaching, which features a strong emphasis on the skills to be developed, mostly happens indoors. For example an adult carefully taught the children to hold the hammer correctly before attempting to hammer the nails into the wood. She supported them well until they finished the task. Physical activities in the hall are well planned and provide a good level of challenge for the children. Teachers know children's abilities well and give clear, simple instructions to develop children's spatial awareness through music and movement activities. Children dance with great enthusiasm and make good progress during their time in nursery.

99. Most of the teaching outside is less successful than that indoors. This is because, at times, large numbers of children choose to use the paved area and the activities being supported by adults become congested and the learning for some children is reduced. An example of this was seen during a climbing activity. It began very successfully with an adult working with a small group of children who encouraged them to try different ways of climbing the frame before they used the slide. Their skills increased and they grew in confidence. However, when they were joined by a much larger group of children, they had fewer chances to practise these skills and their rate of progress slowed.

100. The school has suitable equipment, indoors and out, to develop physical skills.

101. The indoor accommodation for physical skill development is good. The use of the hall in the neighbouring school for physical skill development and music and movement enhances the provision. However, the paved area outside the nursery which is used for physical skill development is crowded if large number of children are allowed out at any one time to use it. The grassed area was muddy and wet and unavailable for use during the inspection.

Creative Development

102. The children's attainment in this area of learning is in line to meet the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. All children make good progress in improving their imaginative and creative skills.

103. Children are enthusiastic and keen to become involved in all creative activities, enjoying the freedom to express ideas and feelings. They draw, print and make models with great enthusiasm.

Children mould and shape clay into faces and choose suitable tools to use for their task. Most children use scissors, brushes, spatulas and glue with confidence as they cut and stick assorted paper to make models of rockets and space ships.

104. All children enjoy music. They use a good range of percussion instruments to express rhythms, using techniques such as beating, strumming and shaking. They can accompany taped music and some can accompany their own singing of traditional and popular songs. The good use of voice and demonstration by staff ensures that children using English as an additional language and children with special educational needs can join in the activity and make good progress.

105. The quality of the teaching in over a third of the lessons was good and the rest was satisfactory. Teachers are good at organising the curriculum effectively and ensuring there is a good range of stimulating activities available on a daily basis. They set up exciting learning environments. For example, children are eager to play in the role play area and develop their imagination well when wearing moon boots and space costumes in the Space Ship and rocket. Careful discussion between staff and children, as they act out their voyage in space, introduces new vocabulary and extends the play. Following the last inspection report, teachers now ensure that children are given many opportunities to take responsibility for selecting their own resources. All children are confident in selecting materials from a large bank of resources and in using them independently or as part of a group. When making mobiles, for example, children explored the shape, colour and texture of materials as they carefully selected the resources which were appropriate to use for a silent mobile and a mobile that made a noise.

106. However, the teaching is less successful when the staff give children too much help and support as they complete tasks. The pace of children's learning slows and some opportunities to extend their skills are missed. For example, some children who could make a good attempt at writing their own name waited while an adult wrote their names on their work. Other children waited for an adult to direct where to secure the lolly sticks on the hat and help fasten it with staples. Opportunities for individuality and independence were missed here.

107. Resources for creative development are good. There is a wide range of appropriate, attractive, stimulating resources available to all. Children take very good care of all resources. For example, children using musical instruments returned them to their storage box before moving on to the next activity. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Similarly, at the end of activities all children now work hard at clearing away the surplus resources in the creative area of the nursery.

108. All staff place great value on the children's work. Attractive displays around the nursery demonstrate the children's ability to use a wide range of materials to create pictures, patterns and collage.