

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLE NURSERY SCHOOL

Derby

LEA area: Derby

Unique reference number: 112482

Headteacher: Mrs D Eley

Reporting inspector: Ms A M Coyle
20603

Dates of inspection: 29 February – 2 March 2000

Inspection number: 195311

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 children:	3 - 4 years
Gender of children:	Mixed
School address:	Copeland Street
Postcode:	Derby DE1 2PU
Telephone number:	01332 347388
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Fuller
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Angela Coyle	Registered inspector	Language & literacy Physical development Creative development English as an additional language	How high are the standards? How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed? Efficiency
Edmund Worby	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, values & personal development How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents & carers?
Jane Pinney	Team inspector	Mathematics Knowledge & understanding of the world Personal & social development Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children? Staffing, accommodation & resources

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castle Nursery School is situated on the south-western side of the city of Derby, on a light industrial estate. It does not have an immediate catchment area, and parents bring their children to the school from various surrounding districts. There are currently 64 girls and boys under the age of five who attend the school on a part-time basis. Children are admitted into the school after their third birthday, and attainment on entry is average overall. Twenty per cent of children are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is high compared to other schools, and five per cent learn English as an additional language. The percentage of children who have special educational needs is lower than the national figure, at six per cent, and only two per cent of children are known to be eligible for free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is an effective learning environment in which children receive a positive start to their education, because the quality of teaching is sound overall, and the school is effectively managed by the headteacher.

What the school does well

- Children achieve good standards in creative activities and personal and social development, because the quality of teaching is notably good in these areas of learning. Children also have good skills in listening. They behave well and show keen attitudes to learning.
- There is a significant amount of good teaching. Teaching is occasionally very good indeed in creative development, and this helps children to increase their imaginative skills. Members of staff manage children very well during activities. They are good role models for the children, and use time and the wide range of good quality resources well.
- The school takes good care of the children, and its good partnership with parents has a positive effect on learning.

What could be improved

- Teachers' daily planning is not always clearly focused on what children are expected to learn in activities, and assessments of children's work are not used sufficiently well to help them plan their lessons.
- There are no clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum. The monitoring of attendance is not rigorously undertaken.
- The role of the governing body is not sufficiently developed to enable it to oversee the school's provision effectively; too much is left to the headteacher, and, as a result, governors are not fully involved in managing the school.

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 July 1997. Since then, most of the key issues identified in the inspection report have been addressed effectively. The arrangements for admitting children have been streamlined, and parents help to register their children each morning. The curriculum is now planned clearly to the Desirable Learning Outcomes, and there are more structured activities to provide challenge for the most able children in writing and mathematics. However, although satisfactory assessment procedures have been developed, they are not used sufficiently by teachers to help them plan their work, and learning objectives are still not always clearly defined in relation to what children have learned previously.

STANDARDS

Children enter the school at the age of three, with a suitable range of language and social skills. They make sound progress in their learning, so that by the time they are four years old, they are well on their way to achieving the Desirable Learning Outcomes¹ in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. They make notably good progress in creative activities and personal and social development because all adults teach these aspects particularly well and work hard to develop a wide range of skills; children are likely to exceed the desirable outcomes for learning in these areas, by the time they are five.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children show good attitudes to learning. They participate well in activities and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are good. Children listen carefully to their teachers and respond well to instructions.
Personal development and relationships	Children relate well to each other, and are polite. They develop their social skills well and are willing to accept responsibilities for choosing activities and tidying up.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Children enjoy coming to school and are usually punctual.

Children are keen to learn and respond well to the opportunities they are given.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children:	
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory

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 quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a significant amount of good teaching. All of the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, or better, with 41 per cent judged to be good, and three per cent very good. Teachers and nursery nurses are quietly spoken and gentle with the children, whom they value highly as individuals. This helps to provide a caring environment in which all children can thrive and achieve their full potential. As a result, children make steady progress in learning, overall. They develop their creative and personal and social skills particularly well. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are soundly taught, so that each child builds steadily on their knowledge and understanding.

¹ ON DESIRABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

In 1996, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), formerly SCAA (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority), produced a set of 'Desirable Learning Outcomes for children's learning on entering compulsory education'. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five, in six areas of learning: language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal and social development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is planned appropriately to the Desirable Learning Outcomes, and covers all the recommended areas.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Children with special educational needs are supported soundly by staff. However, although there are appropriate individual education plans in use, there is no specific register to identify children's needs in relation to the different stages of the Code of Practice. ²
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Satisfactory provision is made for children who learn English as an additional language, but no additional support is available for them in their mother tongue.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes sound provision for children's spiritual and cultural development. Their personal, moral and social development is well promoted.
How well the school cares for its children	Children are well cared for, in a secure and stimulating environment.

The school provides useful information about the curriculum and daily routines through newsletters and informal discussions with parents. It works well in partnership with parents; these good links help the school to provide a caring, welcoming ethos by building on good relationships formed when children first enter the nursery.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior teacher effectively undertake the leadership and management of the school, and provide sound support to colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The role of the governing body is not fully developed. Governors are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the work of the school and they do not help to draw up the school development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's provision are unsatisfactory because there are no clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

² ON SEN CODE OF PRACTICE

Code of Practice - this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that children who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development.

The strategic use of resources	The local education authority manages the major part of the school's budget. However, although the funds available for resources are managed effectively by the headteacher, the governing body does not ensure cost-effectiveness of the financial decisions taken.
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The school's accommodation is clean and well maintained. All of the resources are managed well, but the governors do not ensure that best value principles are applied effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents and carers most	What parents and carers would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is a caring and welcoming environment. • All members of staff are friendly and approachable. • The teaching is good. • The school is led and managed well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would appreciate improved links between the home and school before their children enter the nursery.

Inspectors support all of the views expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall, the oldest children under five make sound progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, and are well on their way to achieving the Desirable Learning Outcomes. All children make good progress and achieve good standards in creative development and personal and social development, because adults have high expectations and place great emphasis on developing these areas. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the opportunities for children to develop their writing skills, by introducing regular structured activities. There are also more challenging tasks in mathematics for the most able children.
2. The oldest children in the school are well on the way to achieving the desirable outcomes for learning in language and literacy. They all make sound progress because the teachers and nursery nurses are secure in their knowledge of how to teach basic skills. For example, children achieve good standards in listening, because all adults make sure that children pay good attention to them and listen carefully when being given instructions and guidance in their activities. The youngest three year olds learn how to take turns when speaking to each other, and are beginning to show confidence when speaking to adults. All children are developing their writing skills systematically; they begin by making marks on paper when they are three, and learn how to form recognisable letters by the time they are four. The most able children can write their own names, and a few can compose simple, short sentences.
3. Overall, the oldest children make sound progress and achieve the standards expected for their age in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, and are well on the way to achieving the desirable outcomes for learning by the time they are five. For example, they know terms such as, *'big'* and *'small'* and can make comparisons between empty and full containers. The current project on *'Wild Animals'* is enabling the children to learn about circles and gain an awareness of three-dimensional shapes.
4. Children make particularly good progress in personal and social development, and in creative activities. They are likely to exceed the standards expected in these areas of learning by the time they are five years old, because teachers place strong emphasis on developing children's social and imaginative skills. Children particularly enjoy painting, drawing and collage work. They increase their social skills very effectively by sharing equipment, and taking turns to visit the home corner using the peg labels.
5. Children with special educational needs make sound progress in most areas of learning and achieve appropriate standards for their abilities. They make satisfactory progress in relation to the targets set for them on their individual education plans. Good support by adults helps them to gain confidence and extend their learning. They often receive individual attention, which enables them to acquire and develop new skills. They make good progress in creative development, and in personal and social skills. Children who learn English as an additional language are developing their understanding of spoken English by taking part in activities, such as story time, where they learn to share books with their teachers and other children. However, there is no additional bilingual support available to the school to help children who are at an early stage of language acquisition. This sometimes limits their progress.

Children's attitudes, values and personal development

6. All the children respond well in lessons. They show keen interest in their activities and most are able to concentrate for appropriate periods. Children remain well behaved, even when an adult is not directly supervising them. They enjoy coming to the nursery and respond with interest to the activities offered. Children all apply themselves well to their tasks and are keen to succeed.
7. Children from different social and ethnic backgrounds play happily together. They are generally sensitive to each other's feelings; they take turns and share resources well. There were no pupil exclusions in the latest reporting year.
8. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that the nursery achieves high standards of behaviour. No incidents of bullying were observed. Children with special educational needs behave well in class and around the nursery.
9. Overall, the nursery functions well. This is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. Very secure and mutually respectful relationships between children and adults are a characteristic of the school. Children are at ease with their teachers, support staff and visitors, and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, by the time they leave.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall. In the lessons observed, 100 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better. Teaching was good in 41 per cent of lessons and very good in three per cent. This finding shows that the school has improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, because there is now more good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching. As a result, children make sound progress in their learning overall, because they are encouraged to build steadily on their knowledge and understanding.
11. All adults have sound knowledge of the six areas of learning, and they teach basic literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Their knowledge is notably strong in creative development and personal and social development; learning is good in these areas, because teachers focus well on increasing children's skills. Teachers' expectations are suitably pitched for all children, including those with special educational needs and children who learn English as an additional language. Members of staff meet regularly to plan work, assess children and evaluate what has already been taught. However, although lesson plans contain clear details of the activities to be covered, they do not specify clearly enough the main skills to be learnt. This occasionally limits the progress made by children, because learning is not always clearly targeted in activities to increase their understanding and develop ideas. Nevertheless, all teachers and nursery nurses work well together in effective teamwork. They provide exciting displays of children's colourful artwork to stimulate the imagination on themes such as, '*Wild Animals*'. Classrooms are bright and cheerful places with plenty of exciting artifacts and interactive displays.
12. The control of children in activities is very good. For example, a particular strength in teaching is that all adults are calm and quietly spoken; lessons are very well managed and conducted within a peaceful, happy atmosphere. All adults know the children well and they have high expectations of behaviour. Every child is highly valued as an individual and members of staff are good role models. These features have a very noticeable effect on children's good behaviour and their good listening skills, because

children learn how to concentrate on their work and show respect for each other. Day-to-day assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers keep careful records of children's successes, including details for children with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language. However, these assessments are not used sufficiently to help teachers plan their future work.

13. Teaching for special educational needs is good. Staff make careful efforts to ensure that the work planned for children is well matched to their individual needs. Individual education plans are used well to help teachers and nursery nurses support children closely. They regularly review these and share them with parents. All staff work together well with children with special educational needs to help them achieve their specific targets. Staff have good relationships, which encourage children to try to succeed. Close contact is maintained with parents and with outside agencies. Children are encouraged to take library books home on a regular basis to share with their parents, and those who are at an early stage of language acquisition are effectively integrated into classroom activities.

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

14. The school has improved its curriculum planning since the previous inspection. Children are now provided with a curriculum that is broad and balanced and covers all the areas of learning deemed desirable for children of this age. The school continues to provide a varied and broad range of experiences. It is particularly effective in the promotion of children's personal and social development and creative development. In all areas of learning, children have ample opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge through a good balance of directed activities and those of their own choice. Both indoor and outdoor areas are used well to provide daily activities within each of the desirable areas of learning. The children are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education
15. The school's long-term planning, covering an appropriate range of topics, is firmly based on the desirable areas of learning. The school has satisfactory strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Medium-term planning has improved since the previous inspection and is now closely linked to the recommended national guidance. However, as in the previous inspection, curriculum planning remains focused on the activities to be undertaken, rather than on the specific skills and knowledge to be promoted. Although staff plan as a team, the focus on activities sometimes results in confusion as to the main objectives for each area of learning. This is not adequately checked because there are no clear schemes of work or procedures for monitoring the quality of the curriculum in relation to the needs of the children.
16. There is satisfactory provision for children with special educational needs. Although there is no special needs register, children who have been identified have appropriate individual education plans. These identify measurable targets and are regularly reviewed. All agencies involved contribute to the targets and their reviews. Staff are fully aware of the targets, and individual education plans are easily accessible to them. The needs of the children are regularly discussed during staff meetings.
17. There are good links with the community, which make an effective contribution to children's learning. For example, people from the local area, such as the fireman and milkman, come to the school to talk about their jobs. Links with the local schools are limited. The school has endeavoured to establish constructive links and records are sent on to all primary schools. However, the establishment of effective links is

constrained by the large number of schools involved. The curriculum is enhanced by visits, visitors to the nursery and by making good use of the local environment. For example, children frequently go to the bus station to take a ride to the park.

18. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Children are given satisfactory spiritual opportunities to develop self-respect and to value the beliefs of others. For example, they learn about the Hindu festival of Diwali. Respect for the beauty and fragility of the natural world is effectively promoted in the topic on animals and as children learn to take care of pets, such as guinea pigs, goldfish and budgerigars. Lessons and stories are used effectively to generate a sense of awe and wonder in the children, such as when, in music and movement, children were totally enthralled, as they used their imagination to visit '*Outer Space*'. During the school day, there are appropriate moments for reflection and a prayer, such as before lunch.
19. The provision for moral development is good. Positive approaches to behaviour management make a significant contribution to children's learning. Children are taught sensitively about the differences between right and wrong, and the staff consistently reinforce moral values. The nursery successfully fosters the qualities of tolerance, equality, courtesy and good manners. For example, daily snack time is used most effectively to reinforce these qualities. In a range of activities, including the imaginative play area, children learn to respect and value each other's contribution. They are influenced by the way the adults clearly value the children's contributions and ideas.
20. Good provision is made for children's social development. The settling-in period, provided when children first enter the school, provides very good opportunity for the development of social skills. Staff help children to make their own decisions about which activities to choose and how to go about them. Children are encouraged to develop independent skills; for example when dressing themselves for outdoor play. They are also helped to share and to take turns. Good manners are consistently taught and children respond very well to the staff. Children are expected to complete a task and to tidy away before moving on to something new. As the produce from the school's Harvest Festival is distributed to those in need, children become aware that there are those less fortunate than themselves.
21. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Children regularly make trips into the wider community, which serves to develop their awareness of their local heritage. They sing a large variety of nursery rhymes and are familiar with many well-known stories, such as, '*The Three Little Pigs*'. Sound opportunities are provided for children to experience a variety of cultural activities through the celebration of traditional festivals, such as Christmas, Diwali, and the Chinese New Year. The school has an adequate stock of multicultural resources, including dressing-up clothes, although there are only a few musical instruments from other countries. The children look at foods from different cultures and there are sufficient books to reflect the cultural diversity of the nursery school. The staff provide the children with sound opportunities to become familiar with different religions and to value other cultures and beliefs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

22. The school has maintained its good standards of care since the last inspection. There are clear procedures for ensuring child protection and maintaining the overall environment, which contribute significantly to the quality of learning.

23. Effective procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development have been developed to include clear guidance for promoting discipline. Teachers know the children well and keep appropriate records of their progress. As a result, the nursery functions as a very orderly community and standards of behaviour are good.
24. The procedures for monitoring and supporting children's academic progress are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its assessment procedures by introducing individual targets for children's learning. These targets are beginning to be used to sound effect in daily activities, but they are not yet regularly evaluated to make sure that teachers plan effectively from the assessments made.
25. Since the last inspection, the school has made effective changes to its admission arrangements by encouraging parents to enrol their children for parts of the week, rather than on separate days. However, the school does not rigorously monitor daily attendance. For example, the new system, which requires parents to record their child's attendance when they enter the nursery, is not satisfactory, because errors are made when some children are not registered as being present.
26. The quality of the first-aid procedures is sound, and staff are appropriately trained in the provision of emergency aid. However, the procedures for ensuring the health and safety of children are not rigorous enough, because the governing body does not conduct regular risk assessments of the premises.
27. Children who are identified with special educational needs are given a sound level of support. They are regularly assessed by staff in the nursery and by outside agencies. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed and new targets established. However, children are not formally identified as having special educational needs until they require an individual education plan. The lack of a specific register for special educational needs makes it difficult to track children in order to ensure that they receive sufficient support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS?

28. The school's partnership with parents is good. This situation is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. Parents receive useful information, both verbally and in writing, about events at the nursery.
29. Parents are actively encouraged to come into the school, especially at the start of lessons to ensure their child settles. A number of parents regularly help in the nursery and on educational visits; staff value their contribution, which has a positive effect on the standards attained.
30. The parents have very good opinions of the nursery and they are provided with satisfactory information relating to children's progress. A few parents expressed the view that they would like better home-school links prior to their children entering the nursery. In response, the introduction of a home-school agreement is being considered.
31. Parents express satisfaction at the well-defined and planned sequence of visitors and visits that enhance the quality of information provided and greatly contributes to children's personal development.

32. Overall, there is very strong parental satisfaction within the nursery, based on a secure understanding and a regular involvement in the work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

33. The quality of leadership shown by the headteacher is sound and the school's capacity for future improvement is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum planning has been developed to respond appropriately to the Desirable Learning Outcomes, as specified in the national guidance, and assessment procedures have been improved to satisfactory level. The school's aims are met to create a secure, stimulating and caring community in which children are supported well.
34. All teachers and nursery nurses are dedicated to the education of the children and have clear responsibilities in the running of the school. The good relationships between staff and good teamwork help to ensure that the school has a sound ethos for learning. However, there are no clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and the curriculum.
35. A school development plan has been put together by the headteacher and staff, but it does not provide sufficient guidance for long-term developments. Future targets have been appropriately identified to include the improvement of facilities for information technology. For example, a new computer has recently been purchased, but, as yet, staff have not received training and the school does not have sufficient software to use.
36. Members of the governing body provide effective pastoral support to the headteacher and take an interest in the school. A few governors are regular visitors and often help in classrooms. However, the governing body is not sufficiently involved in monitoring the provision or helping to devise the school development plan. Too much is left to the headteacher, and governors are not sufficiently involved in the strategic management of the school.
37. The management of the provision for children with special educational needs is sound. The headteacher oversees provision and gives helpful support to colleagues by making sure that records are kept of children's needs and the guidance they require. Individual education plans are updated regularly and appropriate targets are written in consultation with the staff. However, there is no specific register to enable the headteacher to keep track of children. Children who learn English as an additional language are adequately provided for, but there is no additional bilingual help available to help them access the curriculum. This sometimes leads to slow progress of a few when they find it difficult to understand what is being said.
38. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers and nursery nurses. All members of staff work hard and are suitably qualified to teach all the areas of learning for children under five. The professional competence of the nursery nurses and midday supervisors makes a good contribution to the quality of learning of the children. The school's clerical assistant organises and manages the office efficiently and the caretaker maintains the cleanliness of the building and grounds to a good standard. All staff have pertinent job descriptions and are clear as to the concise nature of their individual roles. Although informal appraisal takes place, this has yet to be formally documented as part of a three year on-going cycle, linked both to individual development and the school development plan. The school has already organised in-service training to help improve its procedures for appraisal.

39. The overall supply of learning resources is good. The school has a good supply of books and resources for creative development that are of a high quality. All resources are readily accessible to staff and children. These are suitable for the ages and needs of the children. The accommodation is satisfactory. The one large classroom is of sufficient size for the number of children on roll, and there are separate areas for withdrawal or quiet activities. Externally, the outdoor play area is somewhat limited and necessitates close supervision to avoid collisions, as for example, when children are riding tricycles amongst others who are playing with balls. The school is light, airy and well maintained and the quality of displays greatly enhances the learning environment.
40. The headteacher manages the small delegated budget for resources effectively. However, the governors do not regularly apply the principles of best value when making financial decisions, to ensure that money is spent to the best advantage of the children in its care.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. In order to maintain the standards achieved, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) improve the quality of teachers' daily planning by:
 - making sure that learning objectives are clearly planned to focus on what children should learn in each activity; *
 - using the assessments made of children's work more effectively to assist teachers plan their lessons; **(paragraph 11 and 12)*
 - (2) develop the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning during activities;
 - regularly checking that the curriculum is appropriate to the needs of the children;
 - making sure that levels of attendance are rigorously monitored;*(paragraphs 15, 25, 34)*
 - (3) strengthen and develop the role of the governing body by:
 - introducing ways of ensuring that the school's provision is regularly reviewed by the governors;
 - increasing the involvement of the governors in devising the school development plan to provide a strategic long-term view of future developments;
 - making sure that there are appropriate procedures for governors to measure the cost-effectiveness of any financial decisions taken.*(paragraphs 35, 36 and 40)*

(indicates key issues from the previous inspection that have not been improved sufficiently)*

In addition to the issues above, there are a few minor areas for development indicated in paragraphs 16, 30 and 37, relating to:

- *the provision of a specific register for children with special educational needs;*
- *the development of links with the home; and,*
- *the provision of bilingual support for children who learn English as an additional language.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	3	42	55			

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 children

Children on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	32
Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	4

English as an additional language	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	4

Child mobility in the last school year	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of children per qualified teacher	18

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9 ³
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	£
Total income	119,132
Total expenditure	121,511
Expenditure per child	3,038
Balance brought forward from previous year	152
Balance carried forward to next year	2,531

³ The school has a partially delegated budget for learning resources only. The local education authority manages the major part of the school's budget.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	61
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	26	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	15	0	0	15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	7	0	0	74
The teaching is good.	96	4	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	19	0	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	93	7	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	26	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	93	0	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	19	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	78	19	0	0	4

NB: totals may not add up to 100, due to rounding

Other issues raised by parents and carers

Twelve parents attended a meeting held at the school, and two parents wrote to the registered inspector. The majority of comments were positive, and parents took the opportunity to express their satisfaction with the school. A small number of parents would like to be more involved with children's learning through better home-school links, before children enter the nursery.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

Personal and social development

42. The oldest children make good progress and are likely to exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. Children develop effective relationships with each other and adults. For example, children take on roles and play well together in the home corner. Many children learn to show respect for each other and are becoming considerate of each other's needs. This was demonstrated well in a technology activity, where one child, noticing his friend was without a hammer, offered the use of his own. During group times, almost all children take turns when speaking, and are polite and courteous. They share well, for example, on the outdoor toys, and are developing good attitudes to learning. Children concentrate well when listening to stories, and persevere with practical activities until the task is complete. They take care of the nursery and its equipment, frequently tidying up when they have finished. For example, children modelling with play dough, confidently used a dustpan and brush to clear up after they had finished. Children develop independence very well. They make their own choice of activity and frequently select their own tools and materials. They take on an increasing range of responsibilities, as they grow older. For example, in snack time younger three year old children put straws in each drink, whilst older children take it in turns to carry drinks cartons around to each member of their group. Children learn to treat all living things with respect; for example, they look after the guinea pigs, goldfish and budgerigars carefully. Progress is good, due to the care, sensitivity and expectations of all the staff. A high priority is placed on giving children ample time to settle into the daily routines when they first begin school. As a result, children rapidly feel secure in the school environment and begin to make progress in developing their independence through the wide range of activities that combine to provide a rich learning environment.
43. The quality of teaching is good. Plans clearly identify development in this area of learning. All staff act with consistency as they apply the code of discipline, resulting in the majority of children being aware of the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Good classroom organisation encourages the development of children's independence. For example, the number of children allowed in certain areas, such as the home corner, is limited to the number of badges hanging there. By pegging on a badge when they enter the home corner, children learn to regulate for themselves who participates in this activity. The staff are good role models and continually reinforce expected behaviour and attitudes.

Language and literacy

44. The oldest children in the school are well on the way to achieving the expected outcomes in language and literacy. All children make steady progress overall, and many achieve good standards in listening. They pay careful attention to adults, respond enthusiastically to questions and follow instructions well. Children are keen to be involved in discussions. They speak clearly and talk about their work confidently. For example, in one lesson, children were taught well how to explore different footprints made by small animals, through questions such as, '*What makes a footprint?*' and '*We haven't got paws, have we? What have we got?*'. They thought carefully and were able to identify the difference between the marks made by a cat, a kitten and a human. The children develop a clear understanding of how to handle books by observing their teachers and soon begin to show basic early reading skills because of the carefully chosen texts

provided. They enjoy listening to stories, and are able to sit still and listen attentively. Many children like opening books from the book corner and enjoy looking at the pictures in books, such as, *'Elmer the Elephant'*. The youngest three year olds are beginning to experiment with making their own marks on paper and many make successful attempts to recognise their own names. By the time they are four, most children can use large pencils and crayons effectively to copy letters of the alphabet and write numbers. The oldest, most able children can write very simple sentences and form their letters well.

45. The quality of teaching is sound. All teachers and nursery nurses teach basic literacy skills effectively and work hard to equip the children with the necessary language and listening skills. They are clear and precise when talking to children, intervene carefully with perceptive questioning to make teaching points and use expressive story-telling skills when reading books such as, *'Slinky Minky'* and *'Dogger'*. During story times, teachers encourage calm, quiet environments and structure learning well to include good cross-curricular links with topics, such as cats and dogs. Learning is often fun and sometimes filled with wonder. For example, children responded with great delight when they were shown models of small creatures to help them understand the life cycle of a butterfly from a caterpillar. Teachers make good reference to children's social and moral understanding by explaining that although *'Little Monkeys'* might jump on the bed in the song, children should be aware of the danger in such activities, and that they should never go near a strange dog in the street. However, learning objectives are not always clearly focused or based firmly on assessments of children's prior knowledge in teachers' daily planning, and as a result, activities sometimes lack clarity for the different groups of children. For example, children who learn English as an additional language do not always comprehend what is being said, and struggle to make themselves understood, especially as there is no additional bilingual support available to the school. Nevertheless, the school has developed its provision since the last inspection; the 'Community Day' on Fridays is used more effectively than it was three years ago to target learning for the oldest four year olds, because there are now more focused opportunities for writing. There are also plenty of resources for learning in the form of writing materials and the book corner is well organised, with a good range of high quality, labelled books that are readily accessible to the children.

Mathematics

46. The oldest children in the school are well on their way to achieving the Desirable Learning Outcomes and make sound progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has given greater priority to the acquisition of mathematical knowledge and understanding. For example, the numeracy table has been moved to the front of the class, in order to attract the children's attention when they first enter the room. Direct adult support is now given in the majority of activities. Higher attaining children are beginning to be presented with greater challenge. Children develop their mathematical vocabulary, for example, when using words such as *'full'* and *'empty'* and when using different sized containers in their water play. Most children can successfully sort items according to colour or size, and are beginning to recognise common shapes. They learn the basic principles of measurement when using construction toys to make fire engines and measuring their ladders to see which is tallest. As a class, they record information in block graphs and discuss the findings, such as which is the most common mode of transport for travelling to school. Children know a range of number rhymes such as, *'One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive'*. Children make sound progress in their understanding of numbers. Most three year olds are beginning to recognise and name numbers. The majority of four year olds recognise and order numbers to five. Higher attaining children recognise numbers to ten and correctly complete simple worksheets; for example when they match the correct number of

candles to the cake. All children use their numeracy skills well at snack time when they match one straw to each drink carton and count out five grapes for each child. Children make their own choices from a range of mathematical activities and demonstrate concentration and perseverance. They enjoy number games, such as lotto, and participate well as members of a group, allowing others to take their turn before applauding each other. Most children enthusiastically join in the singing of number rhymes.

47. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Where teaching is good, a variety of strategies are employed which improve learning through increasing children's knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, assessment is used effectively to ensure that children are being challenged. However, in some cases, lessons do not have learning objectives that are specifically focused on the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age. This sometimes leads to confusion as to the main purpose of the activity and limits progress. For example, in one lesson, children were acquiring bad habits in number formation as they started at the bottom to draw around wooden numbers. This was because it was unclear whether the main purpose of the lesson was to improve drawing skills or to develop numeracy. Mathematics is used effectively in other areas of the curriculum to reinforce learning and increase progress. All staff have established good relationships with the children and manage them very well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

48. Children are likely to attain the appropriate standards by the time they are five. The school provides a wide range of experiences and children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning, which includes scientific, technological, geographical and historical learning. In their topic on animals, children examine the features of different creatures. For example, they know that rabbits are covered with fur, while birds are covered with feathers. As they learn about animals that live in cold countries and animals that live in hot countries, children learn to understand that animals need different conditions for their survival. They know that some animals are tame and some are wild. Higher attaining children can recognise and name a number of animals, including badger, mole, reindeer and fox. As they plant seeds and bulbs, the children become aware that light and water is essential for growth. Children observe model animals through magnifying lenses and begin to record their observations in drawings and paintings. Frequent visits to local areas of interest serve well to develop children's awareness of the area surrounding the school. Children use cutting, sticking and joining techniques as they select from a variety of materials to make animal masks or to create their own collage pictures. They handle construction pieces confidently as they join them together to form three-dimensional models of large and small shapes. When using the computer, the majority of children are able to direct the mouse to compose pictures and to click to change colour. The children's response in this area of learning is good. They are keen to participate in the planned activities and take great pride in their work; for example when they produce collage pictures to demonstrate the different coverings of animals. The majority of children listen carefully to adult instructions and respond appropriately. They are willing to take turns and happy to share resources and equipment. They competently help to clear away at the end of the activity. Most children are able to sustain their concentration for long periods of time.
49. The teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well organised to include a good range of activities to engage and interest the children. Plenty of opportunities are provided for free choice and imaginative play, leading to good interaction between children. Children are well supervised by adults, who move to groups and individuals regularly to give focused support to learning. Effective questioning successfully extends thinking and

increases knowledge. However, progress is sometimes limited because daily planning is not clearly focused on the specific learning area and there is no obvious match of tasks to take into account the different needs of three and four year olds.

Physical development

50. Children make sound progress and are likely to achieve the desirable outcomes for learning by the time they are five. They handle wheeled toys confidently, showing sound co-ordination when peddling and balancing on tricycles. Many children manoeuvre well around objects and people. They enjoy the feel of the play dough as they push, pull, roll and cut it and handle small toys carefully. Children sustain concentration well during physical activities. They are courteous and well behaved to adults and each other, and show willing attitudes to learning, although a few children leave their outdoor toys on the ground when they have finished playing, where they can easily be fallen over. Many are able to walk, jump and move around to find a space and climb up and down on the climbing frame confidently. They use construction kits with increasing confidence and tools, such as scissors, paint brushes, crayons and glue brushes, are handled increasingly well.
51. The quality of teaching is sound. Teachers plan activities effectively and provide a caring learning environment through the use of calm, firm discipline and good teamwork. All adults provide good help and guidance to children in their play by demonstrating skills; for example, useful questions such as, *'Can you bend your knees when you jump?'* followed by help on how to control their bodies, encourage children to develop their skills and grow in confidence. Children are also given helpful advice when playing with the sand and water to help them think about pouring, trickling, and filling empty containers. The school is well equipped with large and small apparatus of a suitable size and type for young children. The outdoor accommodation is used well for a wide variety of activities, such as climbing and small world play.

Creative development

52. Children make good progress and are likely to exceed the expected outcomes for learning by the time they are five. They find enjoyment in expressing their feelings and ideas through a wide range of experiences in artistic, musical and imaginative play. For example, they enjoy painting at the easels and making prints, showing great excitement and wonder at the end product, especially when making models of musical instruments out of card and tissue paper. They are able to identify that rice makes a quieter sound than pasta when it is shaken, and relate this to their knowledge of parts of stories, such as, *'being as quiet as a mouse'* and *'as loud as a lion'*. They enjoy the discovery of play dough shapes when using the cutters to make 'cakes' for their chocolate-box trays. Children enjoy singing and making music with the untuned percussion instruments, using actions enthusiastically in their rhymes and songs. They particularly like singing, *'Wiggly Worm'*, and chanting, *'Boogie-Woogie'* and *'When we went to the Animal Fair'*. They respond well to activities involving movement and music. For example, in one lesson, children thoroughly enjoyed being, *'sleeping lions'*, *'trotting zebras'* and *'slithering snakes'* in time to the music and used their bodies well to interpret the sounds they heard. Children use the resources well to aid their imaginative play in the home corner and show very confident social skills when playing with each other.
53. The quality of teaching is good, and occasionally very good. All adults support children well in their learning and ensure that a good sense of fun is encouraged in practical tasks. Activities are organised very well and suitably matched to the children's needs. For example, children are provided with a wide range of appropriate materials for their collage pictures of feathered and furry animals, and a good selection of musical

instruments for accompanying songs, such as '*Yellow Submarine*' and, '*The Grand Old Duke of York*'. A well-planned range of activities promotes creative development and the children make good progress in their imaginative skills. In one very good lesson, children were enthralled as they imagined themselves journeying into space. The darkened room, eerie music and use of floating bubbles and coloured filters helped to create a sensory experience designed to increase children's understanding of adventure. Teachers have put together good folders of children's work that show lively, imaginative use of colour and good links with other areas of learning, such as mathematical shapes and mini-beast themes. Vibrant displays of jungle scenes, penguins, and bubble painting help to create a colourful environment in which all children are highly valued as individuals. Resources are good and include plenty of dressing-up clothes and musical instruments, although there are only a few multicultural instruments in the school.