

INSPECTION REPORT

POUND PARK NURSERY SCHOOL

Charlton, London

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number: 100098

Headteacher: Mrs Jeannie Hughes

Reporting inspector: Dr Melvyn J Bradshaw
6169

Dates of inspection: 7th to 8th June 2000

Inspection number: 196503

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 to 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pound Park Road Charlton London
Postcode:	SE7 8AF
Telephone number:	020 858 1791
Fax number:	020 858 1977
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr Nick Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	28 th April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Melvyn Bradshaw	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it?
		Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Mr Richard Barnard	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?
Mrs Janet Gill	Team inspector	Under fives	How well is the school led and managed?
		English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Dr Melvyn J Bradshaw, LSU Associates
 185 Wilton Road
 Upper Shirley
 Southampton
 Hants SO15 5HY

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 Inspection Quality Division
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school currently has 30 children who attend full-time and 61 children attending part-time, either mornings or afternoons. Fifty five per cent of children attending the school are girls. Children start part-time in the term after they are three years old and attend for up to five terms. Their last term in the school is full-time; a few children attend full-time earlier than this. The school is over-subscribed and there is little pupil mobility. The majority of children (about 85 per cent) are white. There are eleven children whose first language is not English. However, their level of English language development is not greatly different from that of other children in the school and they take full part in the curriculum offered. The background of children is very broad and about average overall. Ten of the full-time children (33 per cent) claim free school meals, which is above average; this figure is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. Children come from a range of owner occupied accommodation, local authority housing and housing association properties. Twelve children (13 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs. Currently none has a statement. Attainment on entry is very broad, but average overall; the weakest area being language and literacy, especially children's speaking skills. Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the backgrounds of children. There is a wider spread of ability on entry and the number of children for whom English is an additional language is fewer. More children are from an African ethnic background and fewer from an Asian background.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pound Park Nursery School is a very effective school. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained and many improvements are evident. Children progress well and most achieve the expected standards by the time they are five, and many above this. Their personal and social skills are especially good. Children enjoy school and develop a mature, independent approach to their learning. Teachers and nursery nurses form a very strong team and this helps to ensure very good teaching. The outdoor environment is used very effectively to promote children's learning. The school uses its resources to good effect.

What the school does well

- Teaching is very good overall and is never less than good. As a result, children progress well and achieve standards in line with, or above, those expected by the age of five.
- All staff in the school work very well together as a team, this helps to create a happy learning environment.
- The school provides a good curriculum, with the excellent outside environment being used very effectively.
- Children with special educational needs are identified quickly and, together with those for whom English is an additional language, receive good support.
- The school makes very good provision for all aspects of children's personal development; in particular cultural provision is excellent. As a result, their attitudes and behaviour, and relationships, are very good. They are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning.
- Assessment is very well organised and the information used very effectively in planning children's work.
- The quality of care and support given to pupils is high, and the very good links with parents have a significant impact on children's education and learning.

What could be improved

- There are no key issues related to raising standards.
- Minor areas for improvement include the need to improve school development planning to include staff and governors more fully; to develop more systematic procedures by which staff and governors can monitor provision and the outcomes illustrated by children's work; and to develop procedures to inform parents more consistently about their children's progress during their time in the school. Occasionally, a few higher attaining children could be moved on more rapidly in aspects of English.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in April/May 1997, Pound Park Nursery School was found to have many strengths. Weaknesses related mainly to aspects of school management. Since then it has maintained its strengths, improved further and areas of weakness identified in the previous report have been addressed, but not all completed. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. All health and safety issues have been dealt with. School development planning has improved and the recently appointed headteacher has clarified priorities. Staff and governors are not yet sufficiently involved in the process. There has been some improvement in the monitoring of provision in the school, but procedures are recognised to be not systematic enough. Teaching has improved, previously none was less than satisfactory, now all is at least good. Two reasons for the improvement are better planning and occasions when the teaching of specific subjects is more evident. There is more recording of children's work in mathematics and attainment has improved from the previously satisfactory levels. Children's attitudes to school and their attendance are better. Provision for children's personal development has improved, and the previous strength in cultural provision maintained. Links with parents are better and the new headteacher is already providing very good leadership. All staff are committed to ensuring children make good progress in the school and, as a result, the school is well placed to achieve even better results.

STANDARDS

There has been an improvement in children's attainment since the previous inspection and virtually all children achieve the expected standards, or better, by the age of five. In English, children achieve the expected level. They know that writing and print carry meaning, and how the pages of books are turned. They listen well and speaking skills are improving. A few higher attaining children could make more progress in reading and writing. In mathematics, children know numbers to ten and, for those who will leave the school soon, beyond this. They complete simple addition and subtraction sums, recognise patterns and simple shapes. They record their observations systematically using tally charts. Their knowledge of the world is good. Attainment is particularly high in the areas of science and the environment. They produce simple maps about their journey to school and know, often through science, that things change over a period of time. They handle tools well in design and technology and demonstrate good control of the computer mouse. Their creative work, especially paintings and role-play, is good and physical skills are well above the expected level. About six older children already ride bicycles with confidence.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children's attitudes to school are very good. They enjoy school, showing great enthusiasm, and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour in and out of classrooms, and in all activities, is very good. This high standard is also evident when children eat their lunch.
Personal development and relationships	Children's personal development, and their relationships with each other and adults, are very good
Attendance	Attendance is good. Children are developing good habits in relation to prompt and regular attendance.

Children are enthusiastic and enjoy their time in school. The high standards of behaviour make a very positive contribution to children's learning. There are no significant weaknesses.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 3-4 years
18 lessons seen overall	Very 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.

All teaching is at least good, and half of the sessions seen were very good or excellent. One reason for the high teaching standards is the quality of teamwork and co-operation between teachers and other adults, especially nursery nurses. Activities are well planned and teachers' expectations are known to all. Large and small group sessions are very effective in promoting learning and cross-curricular links. Assessment is good and used effectively, although occasionally a few higher-attaining children could be moved on more rapidly in aspects of English, such as reading. Teaching also promotes very good independence and, as a result, children move from activity to activity, selecting what to do but always maintaining concentration and effort. Occasionally, children would benefit from a little more support during these sessions, but in the vast majority of instances nursery nurses are quick to make comments and help children progress. The range of interesting activities ensures children's attention and involvement; very little time is ever wasted.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides children with a rich and varied curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on language and literacy, mathematics and children's personal development. The outside environment provides many valuable opportunities to extend children's curricular experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Children with special educational needs are identified early. This enables them to be given good and effective support, and they make good progress. Management of special educational needs is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Effective provision for children with English as an additional language ensures they make good progress. They are fully involved in all planned activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for children's personal development. Cultural provision is excellent, with children's education enriched by a wide variety of cultural festivals. Strong emphasis on social relationships and moral awareness has a positive impact on standards.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good care ensures children settle quickly and are happy at school. Very good use of assessment ensures children make at least good progress in all areas of learning.

The school has very effective links with parents, who support their children's learning very well. When children leave the Nursery, parents receive detailed information about their progress, but less during their time in the school. The curriculum promotes children's academic and personal development very well and the outside environment promotes physical development and a good awareness of the environment. Assessment and the care of children are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The newly appointed headteacher provides very good leadership. She is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and has already taken steps to improve curricular planning. She is very well supported by the staff, governors and parents. They are determined to continue to maintain the positive ethos and develop the school further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body carries out its duties very conscientiously and is developing a clearer idea of its role in relation to school development and monitoring.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is well aware of the need to refine the procedures to evaluate its performance more systematically.
The strategic use of resources	Staff, accommodation and learning resources are used effectively to give children maximum benefit during their time in the Nursery. The school uses its limited budget well.

The school is very well staffed. Experienced teachers, nursery nurses and other adults form a very effective team. Accommodation is good, the excellent outdoor facilities compensating somewhat for the inadequacies of the main building. Learning resources are good. Within the limited budget at its disposal, the school applies principles of best value well.

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 like school. • Children's progress is good. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching in the school is good. • Parents are well informed about their children's progress. • The school is approachable. • Children are expected to work hard. • The school works closely with parents. • Leadership and management are good. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents had few concerns about the school. • A small number thought that they were not well informed about their children's progress, and working parents did not get sufficient information.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. Children do like school, they behave very well and become very independent. Their progress is good because of very good teaching. The school is approachable and works well with parents. The new headteacher is already providing the school with very good leadership. Parents, including those who are working, receive good information about the school. Inspectors agree that they are not provided with sufficient information about their children's progress during their time in the Nursery.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Children's attainment when they leave the school is good overall. It is at least similar to that expected by the age of five and often higher. This represents an improvement over the previous inspection, when attainment was described as 'satisfactory overall, and in line with national expectations'.
- 2 In language and literacy, children enter the school with standards that are about average, but lower in speaking. They progress well. Children listen well and are becoming confident speakers by the time they leave school. They enjoy books and will often select books to 'read' during times when they can choose what they do. They understand that pictures and print carry meaning and know the way the pages of a book are turned. They listen carefully, and join in enthusiastically, when stories are being read. Children have an improved awareness of letter and word sounds. Children make marks using pencils and crayons and many older ones can write their own name. Many can read their names but few recognise many other words, although a small proportion of older children are ready to start to read.
- 3 Children's mathematical attainment is at least in line with that expected, and often above. By the time they leave, children count to ten, or in some cases much higher. They add and subtract small numbers. They show a good recognition of patterns involving shape and colour. Children join in number rhymes and tackle mathematical problems with enthusiasm. They collect data using tally sheets, such as when observing mini-beasts in the gardens. They know simple two-dimensional shapes. Shortly after starting school, children know their numbers to five and count objects, such as dolls, to match with a given number.
- 4 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is above that expected for their age, in particular in relation to science, the environment and geography. They know that living things vary and that creatures that fly, such as butterflies and birds, have wings. They know that insects have six legs and spiders eight, and that the legs come from the animals' bodies. They observe well and collect scientific information using tally charts. Children draw good maps of their route to school, identifying some of the features seen, such as tennis court. They find roads and railway stations on a map of the local area. Through science in particular, they know that things change over a period of time. Children demonstrate good mouse control skills when using 'drag and drop' programs on the computer. They handle materials well, sticking and joining in a variety of ways.
- 5 The physical development of children is especially good. They are confident and show good control when climbing or balancing on the exciting range of equipment outside. They ride large toys very well, with older children using the pedals effectively to move along. About six older children ride bicycles with good balance.
- 6 Children's attainment in creative development is good. They use colour well when producing pictures or illustrating work with paints or crayons. They enjoy role play in 'the office', which also promotes their knowledge of technology through the use of keyboard or telephone. Children sing well when joining in with songs and rhymes,

especially after milk time or at the end of morning or afternoon sessions. Individuals show an interest in music and play the instruments in the 'music garden'.

- 7 No significant differences are evident in the attainment of boys and girls. Children with special educational needs make good progress in all areas, although their attainment is weakest in the areas of language and mathematics. The children for whom English is an additional language are very well integrated into the school. They have made rapid progress and their attainment matches that of other children in the school. Their language skills have developed sufficiently to allow them to gain full benefit from the school's provision in all areas of learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 8 The very good standards achieved by the children as they progress through the school has a very positive impact on their learning. Standards have improved on those reported in the previous inspection. Children clearly love coming to school and enjoy the wide range of activities provided. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons and activities observed were very good in two cases out of three and in the others were good. Consistently very good attitudes were observed in both formal whole group sessions and also in less structured activities or individual tasks. All children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in their personal and social development and the great majority achieve or exceed expectations in this aspect by the time they are five years old.
- 9 Behaviour is very good at all times and no oppressive or aggressive behaviour was observed. Children settle into routines very quickly and respond very well to the sensitive and consistent guidance given by the staff. Children quickly learn that there are stages and routines to each session and respond very well to the provision made. They are very confident with adults and relationships with adults and other children are very good.
- 10 The personal development of the children is very good. Social skills are developing well; lunchtimes provide a fine example of the children's mature development. Photographs show children clearly enjoying and appreciating a wide range of multi-cultural festivals.
- 11 Children move around the Nursery and the outdoor facilities calmly with a responsible awareness of others and increasing knowledge of what is expected of them. They talk confidently about their work and describe what they have done. They respond enthusiastically when encouraged to be independent. They concentrate well and are very keen to finish tasks. They are very good in independently selecting activities and share resources well. They co-operate effectively when dealing with outdoor equipment. They respond very well when staff explain what is right and wrong. For example, at the start of a story session some interrupt, with excitement, when a nursery nurse emphasises the importance of taking turns and listening to each other. Subsequently, behaviour improves, they do not repeat their interruptions, and they listen intently to the story and other's contributions. In role-play sessions children are keen to contribute, take turns and listen to each other patiently. Children play and work together very well irrespective of gender or ethnic origin. They treat resources and equipment carefully. They can be trusted with a range of tools.

- 12 Attendance levels are good; children are developing good habits to prepare them for the move to Reception classes. They arrive punctually and eagerly begin their tasks with no waste of time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 13 Children are very well taught and this promotes their achievement and learning. All teaching is good or better, with about half being very good or excellent. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection report when it was never less than satisfactory, and none was very good. The improvement is associated with more detailed planning and a clearer understanding of what children are to learn. More attention is given to recording in mathematics, and this has led to higher attainment. The high quality teaching is a result of very effective teamwork between teachers and other adults, especially the valuable support provided by nursery nurses.
- 14 Teaching of all areas of learning, including literacy and mathematics, is very good. Many strengths, and few weaknesses, are evident. Teachers' knowledge of the areas of learning and the way young children learn is very good. Planning has improved since the previous inspection. It is more detailed, but has maintained a good balance of teacher-directed and independent work and effective cross-curricular links. Nursery nurses and other adults are fully aware of the overall aims of planned activities and what children should be doing and learning. This leads to many examples of effective intervention when children are engaged in a range of activities, both inside and out. There are a few occasions when children engaged on independent activities would gain from further intervention by teachers or adults, such as when engaged on mathematical puzzles. Children with special educational needs are very well supported. As soon as a concern is raised, the child is monitored closely and an individual is identified to provide support. Individual education plans provide good detail of targets and activities to achieve the targets. Regular assessment and weekly discussion ensures that provision can be modified as soon as necessary. Children for whom English is an additional language are also well supported by teachers and other staff.
- 15 Teachers' have high expectations of children, especially in relation to personal development and independence. Occasionally higher attaining children could be encouraged to make greater strides, especially in aspects of writing and reading. Activities within the classroom and the outside environment are very well organised and promote good learning and independence. Staff are adept at making links within activities, as a result language development and mathematical skills are enhanced through a wide range of cross-curricular work. Time is used very well and rarely wasted; full-time children gain great benefits from lunchtime arrangements which promote personal development. Regular assessment activities result in good records of children's academic and personal development; results are used well to plan specific work for individuals or groups of children. Parents are encouraged to complete reading and mathematical activities at home with their children.
- 16 The very good teaching, wide range of interesting activities and balance of teacher-directed and independent work help to ensure children's learning is good. As a result, children make good gains in both skills and knowledge. They extend their understanding of language, and in particular their listening skills improve. Mathematical learning is used well to solve problems or support learning in other areas, such as science. Children become increasingly independent, but have

developed the capacity to concentrate and persevere. They rarely move onto a new activity without spending a reasonable time on the first chosen. In all areas, children work hard; they concentrate very well because they are interested in the activities and because adults talk to them about what they are doing. They have a good awareness of their successes and failures; illustrated by the children on the computer who deliberately made the same error, because of the response they then got, and the boy who realised that his matching of bees to flowers in a puzzle was not correct. Children take pride and show pleasure when completing a task correctly. The learning of all children, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, is good and they progress well.

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

- 17 The curriculum provided by the school continues to be good, as reported in the previous inspection. All areas of learning are given suitable emphasis and the overall result is a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the needs of children's academic and personal progress.
- 18 Curricular planning has improved. The process began after the previous inspection and has accelerated recently following the actions of the newly appointed headteacher and her deputy headteacher. Many activities centre around topics which relate well to children's interests and experiences. Long-term and medium-term planning identify precisely what gains in knowledge and skills are expected. The details of the plans are not yet complete, but development is continuing. The short-term plans identify the activities which will help children achieve good progress. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed through well planned specific activities related to language or number. In addition, cross-curricular links are established and used very well. Major strengths in the curriculum relate to children's physical development and raising their understanding of the world around them. In particular, the excellent use of the school's grounds promotes scientific awareness. Within the curriculum provided, very good provision is made for children's personal, social and health education.
- 19 Equality of access to planned activities, and opportunities to progress well, are very good. Staff ensure that all children undertake the planned activities, often working with small, mixed groups. Teachers and other adults ensure that all children have opportunities to complete planned tasks, as well as to make their own choices. The rich curriculum helps to ensure that there is always a wide range of relevant activities available. Children for whom English is an additional language are monitored carefully and staff ensure their full involvement in the planned curriculum. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. Through detailed individual education plans, the support of particular adults and careful planning, children with a range of different needs are fully involved in all activities. Successes of these children are celebrated with others and this further aids progress.
- 20 The involvement of the local community makes a very positive contribution to the curriculum and, hence, children's learning. Many visitors to the school promote an understanding of the roles of adults in children's lives. Cultural awareness is promoted through many visits and activities. The rich outside environment has been enhanced through a wide range of grants and awards. Effective links are developed with some of the many schools to which children transfer. These links include visits by teachers to see how the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies might

influence provision in the Nursery. Good links with the extended-day provision, a pilot scheme funded by the local authority using a building on the school's site, are evident. Staff working with children before and after school make assessments which contribute to the school's records. These relate mainly to children's personal development.

- 21 The provision the school makes for children's personal development has improved on the good standards reported at the last inspection and is now a significant strength of the school.
- 22 Spiritual development is good. Opportunities both planned and spontaneous are taken to encourage children to reflect upon the wonder of life and nature. Children show excitement in discovering about insects. The excellent outdoor facilities provide wonderful opportunities to examine the wonders of the natural world, which are explained well by the staff.
- 23 Moral and social education are provided for very well. Explanations are given to children about why particular actions are wrong and very good encouragement is given to develop responsibility for their own behaviour and self-esteem. The consistent use of praise and rewards supports this well. Children are encouraged to share resources and take turns. Lunchtime arrangements have a strong impact on social and moral provision especially the behaviour of the lunchtime assistants who act as fine role models when sitting and eating with the children.
- 24 Cultural provision is excellent. The school uses the wide range of cultural backgrounds of staff and pupils very well to enhance the provision. The exceptionally wide range of festivals celebrated gives children a wonderful flavour of the richness of cultures throughout the world. The excellent outdoor facilities provide a marvellous focus for development of environmental awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 25 The school provides very good care for the children. High standards of care have been maintained since the previous inspection and all the health and safety issues raised in that report were dealt with promptly and effectively. The current health and safety policy and procedures are very effective.
- 26 Personal care of the children is very good. This is based on the very good understanding by staff of each child, and also the very good records kept to back up the personal approach. Records of personal development are thorough. This process ensures children settle into the school very quickly, feel happy and secure in their time at the school, and are supported well in their move to infant school.
- 27 All staff implement the behaviour policy consistently. Children are well cared for at the end of sessions. The premises are very clean, tidy and secure.
- 28 First aid arrangements are good and the school encourages parents and children to develop good habits in relation to attendance. Child protection procedures are very good and staff are kept well aware of potential issues.
- 29 Assessment procedures are very good and are used well to help set half-termly targets for pupils. All staff consistently record information on achievements and progress. For example, records made by the extended day staff contribute valuably

to the overall monitoring of personal development of the children who attend. Records of experiences are used to build up a very good record of children's attainment, which is used well by staff.

- 30 Children with special educational needs are identified early during their time in the school. Each child has an identified adult who monitors their progress. Regular assessments and staff discussions track their progress, inform reviews and the production of helpful individual education plans. Good procedures are in place to statement children if necessary. Relevant outside agencies and the local education authority are fully involved in the process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 31 The very good partnership between school and parents has a very positive impact on children's achievements.
- 32 Parents, both at the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaire, were almost all positive about the standards achieved by the school. Parents are very well informed about the life of the school and what happens during the school day through a wide range of very good quality and accessible information. The staff are available at the start and end of each session to deal with any issues or problems. The 'contact book' is a useful method of two-way communication for parents who work at the start and end of the day. The procedures are designed to ensure all parents, including those who are working, receive good information.
- 33 Parents are given good informal advice on children's achievements as they progress through the school and an accurate written assessment when they leave. There is no formal system for reporting to parents on progress as children move through the Nursery.
- 34 Parents are given very good encouragement to support the school and their children's education. Their response is very good. Many provide very good help in the school. They raise considerable funds to help provide resources. Parent governors are very supportive. Most parents use the library and games hire facility regularly allowing them to share in their children's learning. The extended day facility provides a valuable resource for parents and the community.
- 35 Parents are quickly informed if the school considers their child has special educational needs. They are fully involved in the review procedures. Parents are encouraged to provide their child with additional support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 36 The leadership and management of the school are now very good. The school benefits from very effective leadership provided by the newly appointed headteacher, ably supported by the staff and the Governing Body. The new headteacher has clarified priorities for development for the school and has taken positive steps to address the key issues in the previous report. All staff make significant contributions to the management of the school, in particular the special educational needs co-ordinator and teacher responsible for the outdoor environment, where their work has significant impact on the progress of the children. A very clear vision and educational direction have been established for the school, with very effective teamwork and commitment from everyone, this has a

very positive impact on raising standards still further. Day-to-day administration is very good; the administrative officer provides very friendly efficient service, where she ensures that there is effective communication in the school. She works to ensure the smooth running of the school and keeps intrusion into the working day of the headteacher and staff to a minimum. The school's aims and values are reflected in the very positive ethos, where very harmonious relationships and very positive attitudes contribute to equality of opportunity for all children and staff.

- 37 The Governing Body is effective, meets regularly and keeps appropriate minutes. Their powers are shared with the Local Education Authority. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The governors are very enthusiastic and supportive of the school and its staff. Many visit the school regularly and spend time in the classrooms to ensure they have an overview of the work of the Nursery. Their monitoring role of the curriculum, or of outcomes illustrated by children's work, has yet to be formalised. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. The governors are very supportive of the new headteacher and are beginning to establish effective working relationships. They are aware that they need to develop systems to ensure that all staff are involved in the construction and implementation of the school development plan, including the need to identify targets and success criteria clearly. Both governors and the headteacher see the development plan as a working document through which to address priorities. The Governing Body shows a clear understanding of school's past weaknesses, how the school has improved, and the direction now required.
- 38 The school has begun to take positive steps to address the key issues raised in the previous report in relation to management. The issues regarding health and safety were addressed promptly following the last inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher, co-ordinators and governors are still not yet fully developed. The staff work closely together to plan the curriculum and are aware of standards of achievement as they know the children very well, however monitoring is not yet systematic or formalised. The system for identifying teachers' and nursery nurses' developmental needs has been informal, the present headteacher is aware that this needs to be improved, carried out on a regular basis and linked to priorities within the school development plan.
- 39 The management of special educational needs is very good. Procedures are clearly documented and staff are fully involved in identifying children and reviewing their progress.
- 40 The day-to-day administration of the school's finances is undertaken very efficiently by the administrative officer. Within the constraints of a limited budget, she ensures that she obtains best value for the Nursery in the purchasing of resources and services. She has developed very good systems to provide the headteacher and governors with up-to-date, accurate monitoring information. Minor issues raised in the last auditor's report have been dealt with. The school makes good use of specific funds, including those for pupils with special educational needs with a positive impact on their progress.
- 41 The school has very good teaching staff who are appropriately qualified with considerable Nursery experience. They are supplemented by a very good level of experienced support staff and a good level of parental help in the classrooms and around the school. Use of teaching and support staff is very good. The very good relationships and teamwork seen amongst all the staff in the school makes an

extremely positive contribution towards the quality of education and to the progress the children make.

- 42 Overall the accommodation is good. Internal decoration is still needed, but most accommodation is adequate and kept clean. However, the area used for the office, staff room and children's library is unsatisfactory. It is cramped with barely enough room for adequate seating for the staff and a library that is inaccessible for children and staff when the office is busy. Displays are used well which creates a stimulating and pleasing environment.
- 43 The extensive grounds have been well laid out and are an excellent outdoor play and environmental resource. Staff have worked hard to create a stimulating environment, which is used very well to provide a rich range of experiences. This has a significant impact on children's learning; very good progress and high standards are achieved in physical development, the scientific aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development. The school has been very successful in attracting funding from a wide range of providers to develop and maintain the grounds. The school's outdoor environment has been used to promote environmental education for young children through in-service training for teachers in other schools.
- 44 The Nursery is well resourced, with a good range of equipment to meet the needs of the children and to cover all areas of learning. Staff have a very good understanding of what motivates children and have given very good thought to the provision of stimulating resources. A good example is the better range of good quality books. They are used well; this helps support the good progress children make. Storage has improved although still limited. The school values the significant contributions made by the parents to supplement the resources budget.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- 45 Standards of attainment in the school are good and children make good progress in all areas of learning. Minor areas which could be improved include greater clarity in school development planning and the need to include staff and governors more fully in the process; the need to establish more systematic ways for monitoring provision and outcomes; and improving the information to parents about their child's progress during their time in the Nursery. There are a few occasions when older, higher attaining children could be moved on more rapidly in aspects of English. The new headteacher is aware that these areas require further attention.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 46 There are no key issues for the school to address; but in the context of the school's many strengths the following areas should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- (1) Improving school development planning by involving governors and staff more fully in the process and by identifying targets and success criteria more clearly. (Paragraphs 37, 38)

- (2) Establishing systematic procedures by which headteacher, governors and staff can monitor and evaluate the school's provision, including the quality of teaching, and the outcomes in relation to children's progress. (Paragraphs 37, 38)
- (3) Developing systems which enable teachers to keep parents better informed about their children's progress. (Paragraph 33)
- (4) Providing more opportunities for older, higher attaining children to extend further their reading and writing skills. (Paragraphs 15, 53, 56, 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
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
11.1	38.9	50	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	60.5
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	10

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	10

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	79

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.8
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FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	10547
Total expenditure	11448
Expenditure per pupil	128
Balance brought forward from previous year	788
Balance carried forward to next year	-113

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	95	5	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	26	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	36	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	26	5	0	36
The teaching is good.	76	19	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	38	5	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	38	2	0	17
The school works closely with parents.	55	38	0	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	76	21	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	19	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	24	2	0	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal and Social Development

- 47 Children's personal and social development are given a high priority in the school, and to very good effect. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are a strength of the school. The school provides a very good ethos and the consistently high quality support provided by staff supports this area of learning very well. As a result, it has very positive impact on children's learning. Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of personal and social skills, but overall they are average. From this start, all children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and the great majority achieve or exceed expectations by the time they leave the school.
- 48 Children love coming to school, and enjoy the wide range of activities provided. Attitudes and behaviour are very good because of the high quality relationships established between children and adults, and between children and their peers. Behaviour is very good at all times and this results from all staff ensuring that children understand the school's expectations. Children's attitudes are consistently high whether in formal, whole group sessions or in less structured or individual tasks. They settle quickly into routines and respond positively to the sensitive support and guidance provided by all staff. Children quickly learn that there are stages and routines to each session.
- 49 Lunchtimes are used very well to support the social development of children who attend full time. Children are involved in setting out the room and clearing away after the meal. They are polite and independent. They behave well and talk sensibly, following the examples of adults who share the meal with them.
- 50 Children respect all resources and take care with them. They appreciate their outdoor environment and work well with other children in it. They share tricycles, bicycles, scooters and other large toys sensibly and are careful to avoid one another on the paths. They take turns, willingly help each other and staff, including when moving material around the site to replace sand or bark chippings in the outside areas. Children develop very good independence when working on their set tasks or when moving on to a new one.
- 51 The quality of teaching is very good, with all staff providing very good role models for the children. Staff have high expectations of children in relation to behaviour, concentration on tasks and independence. Throughout the day, and in all activities planned, very good promotion of children's personal and social development is evident. Staff work very well as a team and the nursery nurses are especially effective at promoting this area of learning.
- 52 The Nursery is very effective at promoting children's cultural awareness through carefully chosen resources and displays in a variety of languages. Children gain a good understanding of the rich cultural diversity of the Nursery, and beyond, through celebrating an exceptionally wide range of festivals from around the world.

Language and Literacy

- 53 Most children are likely to meet the desirable learning outcomes in language and literacy by the time they reach statutory school age. Attainment on entry is wide, ranging from well below to above average. When they enter the Nursery, a few children have under-developed language skills and a limited vocabulary. Most children make good progress in their language and literacy development and acquisition of skills, through a wide variety of experiences in both the indoor and outdoor environments. There are, however, missed opportunities for a few older higher attaining children to develop improved skills in aspects of reading and writing. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in raising awareness of letter and word sounds; this now needs to be extended.
- 54 Children for whom English is not the language used at home are making good progress in their ability to join in with all activities. Owing to the very good support given by all at the Nursery and specialist language staff, children quickly gain an understanding of the English language. They use this well and soon become fully integrated. Children with special educational needs receive equally good support and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Their attainment in language and literacy is not as high as in most other areas of learning.
- 55 Children use their speaking and listening skills effectively in a variety of contexts. They listen very carefully and are gaining confidence in speaking. Listening skills are more developed than speaking skills; a few children have quite limited vocabularies when they start at the Nursery. Children listen carefully in group times and respond well to questions asked of them. They follow simple instructions and use language suitable for different situations. Teachers are very skilful when introducing specific vocabulary, which the children learn to use very quickly. For instance when working with mini-beasts children used the correct name for 'woodlice' by the end of the lesson. When sharing a book together, several four-year olds knew and used the word 'author'. Very well prepared and organised story times motivate children well and encourage them in focussed listening and speaking. For example, children listened very carefully to the story of 'Anansi', and could then describe the events in the story in very good detail.
- 56 As a result of a strong emphasis on books and story telling, children's attitudes to reading and their knowledge of stories are very good. Children enjoy browsing and sharing books with adults and friends, as observed when two little boys were thoroughly absorbed and delighted by the pictures when looking at a pop-up book. Most can re-tell the story from the pictures and pick out their favourite part. Children are very successful in sequencing stories with the help of useful resources. Staff value children's work and, to reinforce story telling skills, stories are typed and displayed. Children know print carries meaning not only in books but around them in their environment. Staff take every opportunity to ensure children see print, as in the outside area where phrases, such as 'over the bridge' are placed to reinforce the action words in the story 'Rosie's Walk'. The Nursery uses children's own names well in a number of situations and a few children can say the sound of the initial letters and recognise several sounds. However, opportunities are missed to move those children who have already achieved the desirable outcomes for learning on further in developing their sound and word recognition skills.

- 57 As soon as they enter the Nursery children are encouraged to make marks which represent meaning or draw what they are doing. For example, through the effective intervention of the teacher, children were recording their observations of the life cycle of the frog. Nearly all the children are confidently making marks and drawing symbols as the initial stages of written communication. Some children are beginning to use random letters in their writing, while a few are beginning to write their names using upper and lower case letters appropriately. They very independently write their names on their work, for example when they have completed a painting. They know that writing communicates meaning and have good opportunities to write in a variety of situations. For example, when they are playing in the office, they write out messages, which are then placed in envelopes. However, there is insufficient intervention to extend some aspects of writing, such as writing common words and simple sentences, for the older higher achieving children.
- 58 Teaching is very good. Staff plan activities well, use resources very effectively, and build language opportunities into many play opportunities. This means that the children respond positively to the activities provided for language and literacy. They take part in organised activities enthusiastically, as in the drama session when they acted out the story of 'Mr Gumpy'. Teachers use questioning effectively to help children to use their imaginations well and predict what might happen in stories, as in the story telling session of 'Anansi', when young children could work out how Anansi would get across the river. Children are encouraged to share and handle books with care and use tape recorders independently. Very effective teamwork enables observations of children's achievements in language and literacy to be gathered by all staff, which contributes towards the child's profile.
- 59 The Nursery has a good range of books now, including bilingual texts, for children to share, read and enjoy. The staff have selected a very good range of 'core' books with which the children have become very familiar. Parents are encouraged to take books and games home to share with their children. There are good opportunities for parents to discuss books and reading informally with the nursery nurses who run the lending library.

Mathematics

- 60 Children's attainment in mathematics is at least in line with that expected by the age of five, and often above. This represents an improvement over the previous inspection, when attainment was 'in line with national expectations'. All children, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. The attainment of children with special educational needs is not quite as high as for most other areas of learning.
- 61 Virtually all children know their numbers to five and many, especially older ones, to 15 or 20. The highest attaining order numbers to 100. They also add or subtract small numbers correctly. The oldest children in particular recognise simple two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, circles and triangles. They use mathematical language, such as long, short, behind and in front, correctly. They recognise patterns involving shapes and colours, and extend patterns when using the computer. Children make good use of simple tally charts when recording the different types of animals seen in the garden or the types of wheeled vehicles being used. Children apply their mathematical knowledge well when completing problems or carrying out practical activities. The amount of recorded work, a weakness at the time of the previous inspection, has increased. Children enjoy mathematical

activities and persevere well when tackling simple problems and puzzles. Progress is good and this is aided by children's ability to concentrate and work on their own.

- 62 Teaching of mathematics is very good and this enhances learning. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and ones selected by the children. This represents an improvement since, at the time of the previous inspection, 'the majority of activities were not teacher-directed and were less focused'. During activities with groups of children, teachers and nursery nurses assess children's understanding well and adapt the work in progress. This was well illustrated by the group working with a number line when problems about understanding the number seven were effectively solved by using and counting dolls. This also helped children progress to simple addition and subtraction work.
- 63 Good cross-curricular use of mathematics is planned by teachers and this aids progress, as well as emphasising the value of mathematics in everyday activities. Especially effective use is made of the outside environment. Staff often intervene skillfully when children are engaged in mathematical activities. There are occasions, however, when children would benefit from more guidance, especially when completing problems and puzzles. When working independently, children concentrate and persevere well with the activities. Assessment of children's mathematical progress is well organised and the information used effectively to plan future work or individual targets.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 64 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good, and in areas related to science, geography and the environment it is very good. This is similar to attainment at the time of the previous inspection. All children, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. Progress is good because of well planned activities and the very effective use of the stimulating environment, which is continually being reviewed and modified.
- 65 The environment includes a wide range of habitats and, as a result, children learn a great deal about the variety of life. Their scientific observation skills are well developed, and they use aids, such as magnifying glasses, correctly. Children know that some insects and birds fly because they have wings, that insects have six legs and spiders eight, and that they are attached to the animal's body, not head. They understand that some caterpillars will turn into butterflies. They record their observations using good drawings and collect scientific data using tally charts, for instance to record the number of tadpoles with legs. Through science, they begin to appreciate that changes occur over time.
- 66 Children draw informative maps to illustrate features of their journey to school, commenting for instance about the tennis court or 'the long road'. They locate railway stations and roads on a local map. Children demonstrate good control of the computer mouse when using 'drag and drop' programs. They know the link between the mouse and the pointer on the screen. They use the mouse to click on and select different icons. Through role-play, children gain knowledge of technology, such as keyboard or telephone, in an office. They use tape recorders well to play back stories they are 'reading'. They select and join different materials using glues or nails. With reminders from staff, they handle tools such as hammers and saws safely. Through activities related to a wide range of festivals and celebrations,

children gain a good awareness of different religions. Throughout the wide range of activities available, children behave very well and show good independence.

- 67 The quality of teaching is very good. Much of that observed related to science, and the quality benefited from the good subject knowledge shown by staff. Teachers and nursery nurses use correct scientific vocabulary, such as when a ladybird larva was found on a plant. Children are cleverly taught that we do not know everything, but might be able to find out from other people or books. Teachers make good use of questions to aid children's learning. Literacy and numeracy skills are effectively emphasised during many activities.
- 68 The interest generated by staff helps children appreciate the wonder of nature, while at the same time ensuring that they respect and care for living things. Throughout all the activities, children concentrate and persevere with their work. Assessment of children's progress, and the records kept, are good. Resources are good, although children would benefit from access to more computers and different programs.

Physical development

- 69 By the age of five children are likely to exceed the expected outcomes for learning in physical development. The good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Both boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make very good progress in their movements and co-ordination when using the outdoor equipment. They learn to use a range of equipment to climb, travel and balance with increasing control in the excellent outside environment. They move freely and confidently with a good awareness of the space around them and a respect for other children's safety. Children are competent when riding two and three-wheeled toys and have good co-ordination when they manoeuvre around the play area. They aim well, when throwing beanbags into a net counting and identifying the colours of the bags as they land.
- 70 Children's fine motor skills are also very well developed. Through their play with a variety of equipment, modelling materials, pencils and brushes, they show a growing control and ability to manage smaller items. They confidently handle tools with safety when they saw and hammer nails into wood with a good degree of accuracy. Children cut, stick, paint, make marks on paper with a variety of writing implements and manipulate small items when they use jigsaws or sew. A good example was observed when children played in the office, they confidently used a hole punch, cut sticky tape, wrote a message, folded it and put it carefully into an envelope. Activities in the sand and water help them with the finer skills of pouring, filling and emptying, as when they fill tubes with jugs of water and wash the dolls' hair.
- 71 Children are enthusiastic about their physical activities. They are encouraged to be independent in their choice of activities. They make decisions well and sustain their interest in their chosen activity, often for some considerable time. Various children were observed trying to reach their individual targets, they showed intense concentration and perseverance in their attempts, as in the case of the boy trying to balance while walking across a beam; he was so pleased with himself when he achieved his target. Behaviour is very good; children share, take turns and co-operate well, for instance when they worked together cleaning the house and paths outside with large brushes and water.

- 72 The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers and nursery nurses set up stimulating and appropriate activities very well to promote physical development of both fine and gross motor skills. Children have daily access to the outdoor area; resources are skilfully used which enhances the provision for physical and imaginative play. The staff are particularly effective when working with the children outside, they intervene very skilfully to extend and develop children's skills in all areas of learning. This helps children make such good progress in their personal, language and physical development. There has been an improvement since the last inspection, as there are now specifically focused outside activities, where staff are clear about the learning intention that is to be promoted. Very good management and control of the children ensure they behave well and gain much from their physical experiences. Assessment of the children's physical development is conscientiously undertaken by teachers and nursery nurses, either by using notes or by photographic evidence to record achievements, this information eventually builds up to form a detailed profile.

Creative development

- 73 In the last inspection report the children's creative development was satisfactory. It is now good. All children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. They are likely to meet, and many exceed, the desired learning outcomes by the time they are five. Children's creative development is well supported by frequent opportunities to engage in painting, modelling, singing, making music, drama and role-play. A range of interesting creative activities is planned. In each session, there is a good balance of teacher directed and independent activities. Particular attention is paid to promoting children's cultural development through creativity. A good range of clothes and instruments from different cultures is available for the children to use during imaginative play and adult led activities. Good opportunities are offered in information technology for children to use art programs to draw patterns, animals and people.
- 74 Children represent their ideas in a variety of media, including paint, pencils, pastels and modelling materials. Teachers encourage children to look carefully and represent their surroundings well, as seen in the paintings of flowers from the garden. The excellent use made of the outside environment enhances children's observational skills. Very good links are made with literacy and favourite books. Children are encouraged to mix their own paint and successfully mix blue and yellow to obtain a range of greens for their pictures of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and use pastels and dyes with care to create good representations of 'The Rainbow Fish'. There is evidence that children have opportunities to make three-dimensional structures and work with clay and papiér mâché, but this aspect of art was not observed during the inspection.
- 75 There are good opportunities for children to enjoy and make music, both inside and outside. With effective support from the nursery nurse, children created their own accompaniment in the music garden to go with known songs. The children enjoy singing; a group playing nearby spontaneously join in with an 'ABC' song. Children enjoy singing action songs, which they do with enthusiasm, usually remembering all the words. There are opportunities for children to make their own musical instruments and compose music using symbols to create caterpillar movements. Visitors enhance children's knowledge of instruments, for example when they hear

such instruments as sitars and trumpets and have the opportunity to try to play them.

- 76 The children participate in drama and role-play enthusiastically. There are particularly effective organised sessions for imaginative play when children act out stories such as 'Mr Gumpy's Outing' with a nursery nurse. Very effective props such as animal masks and a wooden boat, ensure all children have confidence to speak their parts and act out the story. In the outdoor area, children continue to be creative and imaginative, for example when they work together cleaning the houses or bathing the dolls.
- 77 The good and often very good teaching contributes to children's achievements in the creative area of learning. Activities and resources are chosen well for their creative potential. The very good support and involvement of staff increases children's confidence to attempt activities, which they do very positively whilst behaving extremely well. Children's work around the school is displayed well. This enhances the environment, whilst valuing the children's efforts and promoting the creative areas of learning. Assessments of the children's creative developments and achievements are kept through observational notes and photographs, which contribute to individual profiles.