

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **EDITH KERRISON NURSERY SCHOOL**

Custom House

LEA area: Newham

Unique reference number: 102700

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Childs

Reporting inspector: Tom Shine  
24254

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 196547

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sophia Road Custom House London
Postcode:	E16 3PB
Telephone number:	(0207) 476 1735
Fax number:	(0207) 511 4971
Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr Bryan Collier
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> April - 1 <sup>st</sup> May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24254	Tom Shine	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
8991	Pamela Goldsack	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?
10240	Lesley Jones	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development Creative development Special educational needs Equal opportunities	
15447	Christine Glenis	Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy Mathematical development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a three class nursery school in the South-west of Newham in the heart of Docklands. It provides 180 part-time places (90, full-time equivalent) for children aged three to four. At the time of inspection the school was fully subscribed with most children attending part-time and 20 full-time. Broadly, the balance of girls and boys is even. They enter the school soon after their third birthday and remain there for between four and six terms, when they transfer to the neighbouring primary school before they are five, in either September or January. Children are admitted to the nursery with limited skills and their attainment is generally well below average. The background of most children is socially and economically disadvantaged and is reflected in the area being designated for regeneration. It is, for example, part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ). Thirty-five per cent of the full-time children are entitled to free school meals. There are 54 children from ethnic minorities, the majority of whom are black African. Fifty-three children have a language other than English as their main language, the most frequently spoken being Yoruba, Twi, Bengali/Sileti and Ga. This is an increase since the last inspection. Twenty-eight of these are in the early stages of language acquisition and are supported through external funding. There are 19 children with special educational needs (SEN). Most of these are related to speech and language needs, although there are no children with a statement of SEN. The school is the oldest nursery in the borough and recently celebrated its seventieth anniversary. The old building has been adapted over the years to respond to changing circumstances. It is committed to educational inclusion and to providing the fullest possible access to the curriculum for all children.

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

Edith Kerrison is a good school that is well led by the headteacher and deputy head. Although the appropriate authority is the local education authority and manages the budget, the governing body is fully committed to the school and is very supportive. Good teaching ensures that all groups of children make good progress, and achieve standards in most of the areas of learning (*personal social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development*), that are appropriate for their age by the time they transfer to primary school. Although standards in the other areas of learning, (*communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development*) are below those normally expected, by the time the children leave the school, they are above the average in the borough as measured by baseline assessment, (the measurement of children's attainment in *personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development*, shortly after they enter the reception classes in the primary school). The school strongly emphasises educational inclusion and all pupils are fully integrated.

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

- Teaching is good in nearly three-quarters of the lessons seen and children make good progress.
- By the time children leave the school, their progress towards achieving the early learning goals in most of the areas of learning is up to the level expected for their age.
- Children's good attitudes and behaviour help them to learn effectively.
- Support for children with SEN and English as an additional language (EAL) is good and they make good progress.
- The head and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and are very well supported by the governing body.
- The school's links with parents are good and help them to make an effective contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.

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

- Although they make good progress, standards in speaking and reading and mathematical development are still below expected levels by the time children leave the school.
- There is a lack of direction and guidance by adults in children's role play.
- Accuracy of assessment of children's attainment on entry.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress overall since it was last inspected in April 1997. Curricular planning has improved and children receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Curriculum policies have also been reviewed to ensure they are compliant with the early learning goals within the areas of learning. There have been significant improvements to the school improvement plan. Most of all, teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and there have been improvements in the area of information and communication technology. An issue identified at the last inspection, and not fully resolved, is assessment on entry to the school. Procedures are currently being piloted in conjunction with the local education authority, but currently teachers' assessments of children's attainment are insufficiently accurate to be helpful.

## STANDARDS

When children enter the nursery their attainment is well below average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Because of the good structure in the nursery, the support and high expectations of all adults and a very good adult-child ratio, children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and all, including SEN children, are achieving well. EAL children are well integrated and are also achieving well. All are on course to be attaining appropriate levels by the time they leave the nursery. In communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, although children make good progress, it is not sufficient to raise it to the expected levels. Listening and writing skills are appropriate but speaking and reading and the mathematical development of the older children are still below those expected for their age. In the other areas of learning, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, pupils make good progress, are attaining at the expected levels and are achieving well. Children with SEN and EAL are very well supported and make very good progress in these areas.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good and help children learn well. Children like school.
Behaviour	This is good. Children follow established routines well.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Relationships are very good, but children are not given enough opportunities to exercise responsibility, for example, in putting toys away themselves.
Attendance	This is in line with the national average. Children arrive promptly.

Children's good attitudes and behaviour help them to learn well.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions seen overall	Good

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

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. In this inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of lessons (there was therefore no unsatisfactory teaching) and was very good or better in four per cent. While this last percentage figure is not as high compared to the last inspection, the overall quantity of good or better teaching at 72 per cent is much higher. The quality of teaching is

good in all the areas of learning. The school meets the needs of all groups of children well, including those with SEN and EAL. Taking account of their attainment on entry, the quality of children's learning is good, overall, but teachers could provide more opportunities for children to extend and develop their speaking, reading and mathematical skills.

The ratio of adults to children throughout the school is very generous and this is very effectively used in planning to address the needs of all children in personal, social and emotional development. They focus appropriately on developing sociability and independence, as many children enter the school highly dependent upon adult care. However, their efforts could be reinforced by giving children tasks to foster independence outside of lessons, such as by asking them to help to put the toys away. Strong features of the good teaching in all aspects include very good planning involving the whole team, appropriate emphasis on technical vocabulary and very good relationships between adults and children. In some lessons, good open questioning encouraged children to speak and to develop their linguistic skills. However, questions were not consistently followed up to encourage children to extend their answers when they were very short or monosyllabic. This weakness also applied in creative development, when younger children were not given enough adult support when engaged in role-play.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, overall. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good, overall. The needs of these children are met well but some of the information in their individual education plans is very brief.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. Children are well integrated and supported and those whose first language is English are used well as role models in group work.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Visits to places of interest, including the Museum of Childhood, the Science Museum and the House of Commons enhance the provision for children's moral, social and cultural development, which is good.
How well the school cares for its children	The school provides a very safe, caring and friendly environment for its children.

The school works well in partnership with parents, who think very highly of the school. Since the last inspection it has reviewed the curriculum for its children and it now appropriately complies with the requirements of the Foundation Stage (*from the age of three to the end of the reception year*). More emphasis on speaking and reading and mathematical development would help to raise standards still further. All staff know the children well and provide high levels of care.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy head provide good leadership and effective management. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive and fulfils its delegated responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Teachers and other staff know their children well but need to sharpen their assessment of children's attainment on entry to improve their measurement of progress.



The strategic use of resources	Good. Within the limitations of a budget that is mainly managed centrally, resources are used well and planning for this is good.
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The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching and support staff are very good. Accommodation is also very good. Particularly good features are the parents' room and an outstandingly good, secure outside play area. The headteacher and her deputy, supported very well by the governing body, provide clear educational direction for the school and there is a positive ethos and high staff morale. The school applies the principles of best value well.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• They make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• It works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• It helps children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Parents think very highly of the school and inspectors agree with their positive comments. In the questionnaire a few parents were not happy with the amount of homework their children are given. At the meeting all parents were happy with the books and toys children take home and inspectors agree that this aspect of provision in the school is good. The homework activity bags are an innovative development.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In conjunction with the local education authority (LEA) and other nursery schools in the authority, the school is piloting initial assessment procedures in order to improve its judgements about children's progress. This was a recommendation from the last inspection. While these procedures are in place, albeit on a trial basis, insufficient attention has been given to the accuracy of the assessments, which bore no relationship to the attainment of children as identified during the inspection, including an analysis of children's previous work. This is because there has been no moderation of the teachers' assessments with the other schools. When children enter the nursery their attainment is generally well below expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and learning, and mathematical development. All children, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress in most of the areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development, they make very good progress because there is very good support, including good teaching, high expectations that children will do their best, a friendly secure learning environment and a very generous adult-child ratio. There were no significant variations detected in the attainment of children of different gender, ethnicity or background.
2. By the time they enter reception in the neighbouring primary school, baseline assessment indicates that although they have made good progress, attainment is still below expected standards in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development but is above the LEA average. These are lower than those reported at the last inspection. However, the LEA average is typically below that normally found. Children benefit from the overall good teaching in the school and this is having a positive impact on their learning. Both in the questionnaire and at the meeting, all parents were very happy with the attainment and progress of their children.
3. Parents value the very good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development, including a generous adult-child ratio. Although many of the children enter the school with low levels of maturity and independence, most achieve well by the time they leave the nursery and are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Children with EAL and those with SEN are well integrated and all enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes toward all aspects of school life. For example, at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, children move confidently from their departing parents to their class teacher or nursery nurse, who provide good role models. Clearly understood routines and the practitioners' high expectations encourage good levels of attentiveness, behaviour, politeness and concentration and give the youngest and the most reserved children confidence and security. These standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
4. In communication, language and literacy, although all children are achieving well, including those with SEN and EAL, they are still below the standards expected for their age overall, by the time they leave the nursery. However, this judgement masks variations within this area of learning. For example, most children's listening skills are at the level appropriate for their age and some are above. They benefit from the frequent opportunities given by all staff to encourage good listening skills. Most children listen very attentively and follow instructions appropriately. Their speaking skills are less well developed and, for the majority of the older children, are below those expected for their age. Some children are shy, especially in the presence of visiting adults, and answer questions in one-word replies rather than in sentences. Many children are not used to speaking and this is particularly marked for the younger children with EAL. Although children are given frequent opportunities to listen during storytelling and other occasions, they are given too few opportunities to speak or to initiate discussion. Most children enjoy stories and storytelling sessions and are making good progress in developing their knowledge of stories and books, although standards are below those expected for their ages. During the inspection there were few opportunities observed to raise standards to the appropriate level, for example, in handling or choosing books or in following a text. In writing, most children, including those with SEN and EAL, are making very good progress in using implements such as pencils, felt tipped pens and crayons, and hold these

resources well. Some children are learning to form their letters correctly. A minority of older children are able to use a computer program and the mouse to click on matching letters. Their attainment is broadly at the level expected for their ages.

5. In mathematical development, children are learning to sort, match and count and are beginning to recognise numbers and number words. They arrange dolls, purses and boxes in order of size and understand that the bigger ones will not fit into smaller ones. Older three-year-olds and younger four-year-olds, with help from their teacher or nursery nurse, count and sort plastic vehicles into the same colour. Three-year-old children recognise colours such as red, blue, or green, but are not always able to name them. Individual children can press particular numbers on a calculator when asked to do so and use the computer mouse to click on matching shapes. In small groups, two older girls were able to sort various shapes and correctly identified a circle and triangle, but not a rectangle. Younger children with EAL, under the guidance of the nursery nurse with responsibility for EAL, correctly placed magnetic numbers from one to nine on the appropriate number squares. Children make good progress from a low baseline and by the time they are ready to leave their standards have improved significantly, but they are still working at levels below those appropriate for their age and would benefit from more opportunities to practise these skills.
6. The standards of all children, including those with SEN and EAL, in knowledge and understanding of the world match those typically expected for their age by the time they leave the school. This is because of good teaching and planning and good provision, particularly in science related activities and information and communication technology (ICT). This provision enables the children to have regular access to computers and they are developing skills appropriate for their age, for example, in using the mouse, and for older children matching and naming letters of the alphabet. Children used a 'programmable floor robot', a Roamer, on a floor map for the first time and quickly learned how to program the device to move in different directions. Science related activities are well supported. For example, children were enthralled when they completed an electrical circuit, linking crocodile clips to a battery to make a small propeller rotate. Food preparation and cookery, often supported by parent volunteers, is another good feature that enriches children's experiences. In a cookery session, pupils with EAL were able to name much of the range of fruit they were working with, such as a mango, passion fruit and pineapple. Children are developing their awareness of time and of their locality and the wider world. A parent volunteer who worked at the local airport ably provided an effective airport simulation. Children were able to name the places they wanted to go to and showed some understanding of how long a flight would take. Satisfactory standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
7. Teachers and nursery nurses make imaginative use of the outstanding outdoor play space to extend children's physical development. In addition to containing a varied choice of climbing and riding equipment, the play space also allows children plenty of room to manoeuvre and to develop increasingly an awareness of the needs of others. Children are aware of the safety rules and use the apparatus and equipment independently and carefully. They practise their skills in rolling a ball accurately, and in the tennis area practise their throwing, serving and batting skills. Most children show appropriate skills in running, climbing, and jumping and are confident when using the very good stock of tricycles and scooters.
8. The majority of children have developed satisfactory skill in putting on their aprons and in using and handling tools and equipment such as scissors, paintbrushes and pencils. The progress of all children in this aspect, including those with EAL and SEN, is good and they achieve standards broadly in line with those expected by the time they are ready to leave the nursery.
9. Creative development is another area where all children make good progress and they achieve standards broadly in line with the expectations for children when they transfer to the reception classes of the Foundation Stage in the primary school. Children benefit from the wide range of creative activities, enhanced by the school's focus on raising standards in creative development. Music is emphasised well and children have daily opportunities to sing a range of familiar songs, which they are able to name from home and abroad. They sing reasonably tunefully and are learning to sing softly or loudly to suit the song. Children handle their instruments carefully and are beginning to co-ordinate their singing whilst accompanying themselves with their untuned percussion instruments.

10. Children cut and stick papers and fabrics carefully to produce pictures and collages in three dimensions, helping them to investigate textures and materials. They use a range of resources and the majority have a sound knowledge of colours and use different media and tools creatively, and with growing confidence. Children work well in clay and much of it is good. Although younger children have regular opportunities for imaginative role-play, many are inexperienced and lack confidence in this activity. During the inspection they tended to be left on their own when in the shop and would benefit from more guidance from staff, for example, in suggesting characters for role play, in developing their language when speaking and in encouraging them to dress up and explain what they are doing. All parents are happy with the standards their children achieve and the progress they make.

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

11. Children are enthusiastic about coming to school and display good attitudes toward all aspects of school life. These positive traits among the children are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Children are happy when they arrive for each session and move confidently from their departing parents to their class teacher or nursery nurse. Even the youngest children follow the classroom routines and place their name-tags on the display board before joining in an activity. The children are interested in the inviting range of activities and toys available. For example, the different groups enjoyed pretending to work at an airport and taking turns as airport employees and passengers.
12. The children's behaviour is good and has remained so since the last inspection. The school is an orderly community and children ask questions politely and treat toys, books and equipment with care. Children behave safely and sensibly. On the outdoor climbing frames, for example, children take turns carefully and have learned how to climb and jump confidently. In a music lesson, children listened well and raised their hands to answer questions. The children's enthusiasm and careful use of percussion instruments added to the success of this activity. There is no bullying reported. Parents are happy with the attitudes and behaviour of their children.
13. Overall, the children's personal development and their relationships within the school are satisfactory. Children follow directions, listen appropriately and use equipment such as scissors, glue, water toys and sand appropriately. However, they are not given enough opportunities to set up equipment or tidy up after an activity and are not given the same opportunities to exercise initiative as reported at the last inspection. For example, during the inspection, children were not observed helping to put the toys away after activities. Children behave responsibly when given the task of taking registers to the office each day. However, there are not enough tasks assigned to them to give them an established role in school life. All children form good relationships and those with SEN and EAL are well integrated into the life of the school and follow established routines confidently.
14. Children's relationships with adults are very good and they do not hesitate to talk to staff members and make their wishes known. This is a similar story to that reported at the last inspection. All children have settled happily into this calm and supportive environment. A high level of racial harmony helps to underpin the good relationships among the children. Younger children learn how to take turns, and staff members encourage children to ask for things politely. Many children have a limited vocabulary and appear reluctant to plan games or organise play activities themselves.
15. Attendance, as at the last inspection, is satisfactory and children arrive promptly and regularly for the morning or afternoon sessions.

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

16. At the last inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons and in over half of lessons teaching was good or better, with 13 per cent being very good. Three per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. In the less successful lessons there was a lack of questioning and stimuli for language development; an inconsistent approach to skills development; a lack of systematic monitoring and recording of children's attainment and, in the unsatisfactory lessons, pupils had little interaction with a member of staff. Since the last inspection there has been a 50

per cent change in teaching staff. The two new teachers recruited to the school were previously known and valued by it and staffing has been stable over the past year. In addition there has been an increased emphasis on monitoring of teaching that has become an integral aspect of management. In this inspection the quality of teaching was good, overall, with 72 per cent being good or better. While the amount of very good teaching was less than at the last inspection, the general quality of teaching was better as almost 50 per cent more was classed as good compared to the last inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. Teachers work well with good quality nursery nurses giving good support to children. However, some of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection were still reflected in this inspection, if to a lesser extent. For example, insufficient emphasis is given to children practising their speaking skills, and when children are in role play they are not given sufficient support by adults.

17. The best lessons contain a number of good features, including very good planning involving the whole team, appropriate emphasis on technical vocabulary and very good relationships and good questioning to encourage children to speak, and to develop their linguistic skills. However, on occasion, opportunities to encourage children to extend their answers beyond monosyllabic or very short answers are infrequently taken.
18. Good planning involving the whole team was evident in aspects of all the areas of learning. For example, in personal, emotional and social development it was clear that there was a strong team commitment to consistently high expectations and thorough planning to address the children's needs. The headteacher says that, *"The staff works as a team at all levels and in varying combinations to make everyone feel valued and appreciated"*. Inspection findings support this contention. All staff play their full part in contributing to the very secure environment, valuing the children and their learning. In communication, language and literacy, all staff introduce and reinforce specialist language very well. In one lesson, the children listened very attentively to the story of the "Owl Babies" read by the class teacher. In response to her prompting, *"Let's remind ourselves what the author's name is, and what does the illustrator do?"* many children were able to show that they understood the meaning of author, and some knew about an illustrator. In another lesson in the same area of learning, the nursery nurse with responsibility for EAL skilfully supported a small group using flash cards to extend the children's language. In response to her patient prompting, this group of young children developed their vocabulary well, showing that they could name shapes such as ladybird, scissors, table and door, and in matching objects of the same colour they were able to identify correctly colours such as pink, blue, red and green. In the limited lessons observed in mathematical development, staff planned thoroughly and support was used well. There was good emphasis on developing children's mathematical vocabulary and teaching was good. Good planning and team work were very evident in knowledge and understanding of the world. In one lesson there were various activities connected with "Flight" and the making of aeroplanes. All members of the team, teachers and nursery nurses and support assistants were all very aware of their roles and of what needed to be done. Good opportunities were taken by all to explore and to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world by talking about aeroplanes and airports. On occasion, there was some over-direction by adults when, for example, they were keen to intervene too early in helping children to glue the wings of the aeroplane to the body, when more time could have been given for them to attempt the task themselves.
19. Relationships between all staff and children are exceptionally good. All children, including those with SEN and EAL, feel very much at home and have respect for their teachers and other staff and adults, and are encouraged to enjoy learning. Teachers and nursery nurses have a very calm manner, taking their lead from the headteacher, creating a very friendly, inclusive but purposeful learning environment. The ease with which children feel at home was illustrated well by an instance when a young boy was passing a classroom to which he did not belong. A programmable floor robot, a Roamer, sitting invitingly alone on a floor map, immediately attracted him. He crept in and approached it curiously. A support assistant caught the moment and with a cheery *"Hello, what can I do for you?"* proceeded to guide the child through the mysteries and excitement of controlling the robot. He was enthralled at seeing it respond to his simple commands.
20. In some lessons, good open questioning enabled both the teacher to assess the level of learning of her children, and the children to develop confidence in sociable play and in speaking. In a lesson in knowledge and understanding of the world, working on various activities connected with aeroplanes, the teacher asked the class, *"What things do you see when you are in the sky?"* One

child replied "Houses". The teacher continued, "What else flies in the sky?" "Birds", was the monosyllabic reply. Encouraging the child to speak at greater length, the teacher asked, "What do you think the pilot does in the aeroplane?" the child thought for a moment and replied, "He drives it". However, in some lessons, teachers do not build sufficiently on children's answers, however short, to encourage them to develop further their speaking and linguistic skills.

21. In a cookery lesson in the parents' room, providing a haven from the hustle and bustle of the classrooms, the nursery nurse with responsibility for EAL had organised this small group well. There were three young EAL children, and a fourth, whose first language was English, was used as a role model. There was a friendly atmosphere and the children felt valued and one was confident enough to ask, "What we gonna cook?" Good opportunities were given to speak and listen, with the nursery nurse using good but simple questions. The children were to prepare fruit salad and were asked, referring to the orange, "What does this smell like?" A child replied, "It smells like fresh air". The nursery nurse made sure that the children were able to remember and to identify the fruit on the table, such as passion fruit, mango, pineapple and banana. Having tasted the passion fruit they were asked, "What does it taste like?" "Smelly socks!" retorted a child. The children made good progress in this lesson, but even more would be made if detailed records were kept of their progress to ensure continuity and progression in learning, and if copies of these records were passed on to their class teachers. The nursery nurse is soon to receive some training on this and other aspects of her role.
22. The teaching of children with SEN and EAL is consistently good and they make good progress. In the responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting all parents were very happy with the quality of teaching.

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

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall, with very good provision for personal, social and emotional development, and good provision for knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and music in creative development. The provision for the storytelling aspect of early reading is also good, where all children have opportunities to meet with others of the same age from other classes and lessons are planned specifically for them. The curriculum is appropriately broad, balanced and relevant to children in the nursery (the setting for younger children in the Foundation Stage) including those with SEN and EAL. Since the last inspection, curricular planning has improved.
24. Provision for communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development is satisfactory. Staff do not build in sufficient opportunities to develop children's speaking skills, nor plan sufficient opportunities for children to become familiar with and handle books. There were few opportunities for children to choose books, and during the inspection very little use was made of book corners.
25. Although there were there were few activities for mathematical development during the inspection, staff planned more stimulating and inviting activities on the last day, to which the children responded well. The standards of children in this area of learning suggest that they would benefit from additional opportunities to improve their skills. In creative development there was a good focus on clay activity. A visiting adult led this activity particularly well and children produced work in clay of good quality. Children have regular opportunities to play in role but the staff do not include these in their focus activities and do not give sufficient support and guidance.
26. In personal, social and emotional development, strengths in the provision include the establishment of clear routines which aid children's growing confidence and enjoyment of the nursery. Staff reinforce this area of learning through their emphasis on high standards of behaviour and politeness to all. Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is good and children have opportunities to develop their understanding of time, places around them and in the wider world. Activities planned for science and information and communication technology are good, and children have frequent use of computers, which they use with developing confidence and increasing skill.

27. The outdoor area is an excellent resource and is used well for the children to develop a range of physical skills. During the inspection a parent helped set up an airport simulation, using her work expertise to tell children about the different types of work and jobs available at the local airport. The outdoor area has some very good resources. These include the water feature, which is a calming, peaceful area where children can safely observe water trickling over steps, and watch objects such as leaves gently meandering through the water. When the nursery nurse covered the water outlet causing it to spray out they were able to note how the water changed under pressure.
28. The curriculum has been reviewed to include the Early Learning Goals implemented in September 2000. Curricular provision is appropriately planned and organised to include adult-led and child-led activities although there are too few opportunities for children to initiate activities themselves. All activities are set out for children and they have infrequent opportunities to select resources or materials for their own ideas. The school encourages children and their families to take home reading books, toys and homework activity bags, enhancing curricular provision and learning.
29. Relationships with partner institutions, including the other nursery schools in the authority, and the primary school on the same site to which the vast majority of children in the nursery transfer, are good.
30. The provision for children's spiritual development is satisfactory. The school has a warm and welcoming ethos, where children and their achievements are valued by staff, so that they have confidence-building experiences of success and praise. A number of faiths are reflected in the school community and major faith festivals are celebrated. There were few quiet moments to allow children to reflect.
31. The provision for children's moral development is good and is valued by parents. The school has an established code of conduct in which pupils play their full part. This code is shared effectively with children, and also with parents, through good quality home-school documents, including the home-school agreement. All staff have consistently high expectations for good behaviour and thought for others. Children show an understanding of right and wrong in their demeanour around the school and in their relationships with others. Rare incidents of less pleasing behaviour are addressed through guidance rather than through correction and blame. For example, when a child was upset and walked away from his group session, the nursery nurse gently brought him back so that he could explain what had troubled him.
32. The provision for children's social development is good and is highly regarded by parents. Very good relationships exist between the staff and the children and staff provide good role models. There are also good relationships between the children themselves. Staff guide children's relationships with others effectively, for example, by suggesting more polite ways to ask for things, so "*I would like the ball*" is suggested as more friendly than "*I want the ball*". They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other, raising hands when they want to ask or answer questions. Good manners and personal organisation are regularly reinforced, such as the need to use "please" and "thank you". They show thought for others when carefully rolling a ball, rather than throwing it as "*It might hit us*".
33. The provision for children's cultural development is good. Visits to places of interest include the Museum of Childhood, the Science Museum, the House of Commons and a farm. Visits in the locality which promote a sense of the community include the local light railway and the Excel Centre. There are also frequent visitors who promote positive images as well as links with the community, for example, Asian musicians, a policeman of Afro-Caribbean heritage, a female road sweeper, a father volunteering to cook with the children and school pupils on work experience. Another visitor brought a range of animals, including a snake, for children to view and handle. Attractive displays include African costumes and artefacts, and music from a number of countries is a feature of the music curriculum. The displays and resources reflect and celebrate the diverse school community so that children can take pride in their heritage. The provision to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is similar to that reported at the last inspection.

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

34. The safety and well-being of children is considered an important focus for all members of staff. The procedures for ensuring children's welfare and the arrangements for child protection are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Safe practices are followed consistently by all members of staff throughout the day and the headteacher carries out risk assessments of the site on a regular basis. There is a sufficient number of staff members trained to administer first aid and any accidents or mishaps are recorded consistently.
35. The school's good approach towards behaviour management begins when children are first introduced to the school. Teachers, nursery nurses, students and parent helpers all have high expectations regarding children's behaviour. Their teamwork and shared values contribute well to the success of the school's management of children and results in a friendly and orderly community. The diversity of ethnicity and religious faith is valued and is promoted in celebrating faith festivals and in displays.
36. The headteacher holds responsibility for child protection and is supported in this role by the deputy. The school has its own policy and regulations relating to child protection are reviewed regularly with members of the staff. Statutory requirements in this area are fully met. The school maintains good links with outside health and support agencies that are called upon regularly to help meet the needs of the children. The school is kept clean and the grounds are maintained well. Within the last year support for children has been extended further by the services of the family support worker, funded by resources from the EAZ. Families meet with this worker and discuss concerns and secure practical help each week.
37. The class registers are maintained well and follow the relevant guidelines. Although attendance at school for children of this age is not mandatory, the school makes enquiries if a child does not attend on a regular basis. The high level of care and good arrangements to support children's personal development is well supported by the key worker system. Although children will change class teachers while at school, they will remain assigned to one member of staff who will follow their progress throughout their time in the nursery. These procedures also apply to children with SEN and EAL who are cared for well.
38. Assessment procedures and practices have improved since the last inspection. The school is taking part in a local authority pilot for assessing the attainment of children on entry to the nursery. This is detailed and matches the Early Learning Goals of the areas of learning and the stages to reach them. However staff assessments are not moderated and overestimate the children's attainment on entry to the school. Insufficient attention has been given to this process. The use of assessment as children progress through the school is used well to guide curricular planning.
39. The current children's profiles have developed well, are updated regularly and some contain very good detail of how children behave and learn when doing particular activities. These are good assessment records that cover all areas of learning and include samples of all children's work, and have helpful notes giving information about when and how the work was organised. Staff present the completed versions to parents and carers as a useful record when children leave the nursery. The information is used to compile a report to the next school.

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

40. The quality of information provided for parents is very good and this standard has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents meet formally with teachers at the end of the school year to discuss their child's progress and review a written report on all areas of development and learning. These reports are informative and parents are invited to add their views on their child's progress. Parents are welcome to enter classrooms at the beginning of each session to help their child settle. All members of staff are friendly and easy to approach and parents are encouraged to bring any concerns to their attention. Governors also voluntarily provide an annual general report to parents. There are regular newsletters sent home and information about the school and community activities are posted on an outdoor display board for parents. The induction programme ensures that each child's first days in the nursery are secure and happy. Parents are given a wide range of helpful documents to help them prepare their children for the school day. The headteacher meets with new parents individually and all sign the home school partnership agreement and this helps to



underpin the commitment between home and school. Parents are very pleased with the school's efforts to work closely with them.

41. Parents continue to make a good contribution to children's learning at school and at home. Some parents help in school on a regular basis with reading, gardening and organising resources. During the inspection, a mother employed at the local airport set up a simulated airport in the outside play area and helped children assume different airline roles. During this year opportunities for parents to help their children learn have been extended by resources from the EAZ. In addition to library books, parents are now able to borrow from the toy library and are also given homework activity bags, with reading and writing materials to take home. Parents also team up with staff members to organise fundraising activities to help purchase extra equipment. The school communicates effectively with parents whose first language is not speak English. Some members of staff speak foreign languages and when necessary letters are translated for parents. Bilingual parents are also helpful in translating information to new parents informally.
42. Parents have very positive views of the school. In the questionnaire and at the meeting parents were unanimous in their approval of the quality of teaching, the leadership within the school and the relationship between them and the school. There was also total agreement that children like the school and progress well. Parents appreciate the help given to children with SEN. The inspectors agree with the positive views shared by parents. In the questionnaire a minority of parents were not happy with the homework provided for their children. Inspectors do not agree with this minority view and judge the quality of homework to be good.

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

43. The headteacher provides positive leadership and management, beneath a calm but determined manner, and is effectively supported by her deputy head. They work well together as a team and have provided continuity and stability amidst other staff changes, without losing their ambition to continue to raise the standards of the children. Their good leadership ensures clear educational direction for the work of the school. These findings are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
44. The school has a positive ethos that reflects its aims and values well. Regular monitoring of teaching and the performance of children is a strong feature. Their lead in giving a positive commitment to educational inclusion and equal opportunities, which is shared by *all* staff, ensures that all groups of children, including those with SEN and EAL, make good progress in each of the areas of learning. These findings endorse a recent governors' statement in their annual report to parents proclaiming, *"The governors and staff believe that all children have the right to receive the best education we can provide for them"*. All staff, including nursery nurses and support assistants, are committed to improvement and to ensuring that pupils do well according to their individual abilities.
45. Most of the issues identified in the last inspection report have been addressed well. Curriculum planning is much improved and it takes appropriate account of the *"stepping stones"* of progress towards the early learning goals of the areas of learning. A system for assessing children's attainment on entry is being developed and piloted in conjunction with the local education authority (LEA) and other nursery schools. However, children's progress would be better gauged if the accuracy of the assessment of attainment on entry was improved by external moderation. Clear priorities are linked to financial planning in the school improvement plan, although, as the budget is managed by the LEA, the scope for financial planning is limited. However, it is linked well with the LEA's education development plan and plans for spending the main sources of funding, including capitation, the single regeneration budget, the standards fund and SEN. The school also benefits from funding from the Education Action Zone (EAZ) and uses it well, for example, in providing staff for home-school liaison support and for training and developing policies and practice to support social inclusion. In addition to these improvements, the most significant development since the last inspection has been in the quality of teaching.

46. Performance management is in the early stages of implementation and began in April. Courses of training from the Department of Education and Employment are to be attended by the headteacher, while the headteacher and governors are to attend training provided by the LEA.
47. Although there is no statutory requirement to have a governing body, its members take their duties very seriously and are very supportive and fulfil their delegated responsibilities well. They are very well informed and the chair of governors visits the school regularly. He is committed to the future of the school; all duties are fulfilled very well and he has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Other governors also visit the school regularly. For example, the governor with responsibility for SEN offers very good support, has good knowledge and understanding of his role and meets regularly with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Within the restrictions of the financial resources delegated for management, educational priorities are supported well through careful planning. For example, funding from the EAZ provided for an advisory teacher to help develop ICT and some technical support. Parents think highly of the way the school is led and managed.
48. The administrative assistant provides quiet, effective support and ensures that office routines run smoothly. There is appropriate use of new technology for the limited financial control needed, and for school administrative work. At the time of the inspection, the school was waiting to be audited.
49. The quality of teaching and support staff is good to meet the demands of the curriculum and to enable the children to make good progress. The number of staff is very good with a very high ratio of adults to children, enabling them to know their children very well and to provide effective support leading to good progress. The key worker established by the school is very effective and the arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good. The school uses its staff well, including the nursery nurses. Although a teacher promised by the English Language Service of the LEA for three days a week in the summer term did not materialise because of sickness, provision for EAL is good. One of the nursery nurses provides specific support for EAL children. This is effective and these children make good progress, but it will be more effective still when this member of staff receives the training planned in the new academic year to record the progress of individual children in more detail. Resources in the school, including computers and other technological devices, are good and are very suited to the school's curriculum and the age range of the children. Although the school building is over seventy years old, it is in relatively good condition and is well maintained. The accommodation is very good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The parents' room is a particularly good feature and is used well. The outside play area is an outstandingly fine resource and is a safe, well planned and well stocked environment that provides children with plenty of opportunities for challenge. It is also used well by the teachers as a valuable extension to their classrooms.

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

50. To raise standards and improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and appropriate authority should:
- I. raise standards in speaking and reading and mathematical development further by:**
    - providing more emphasis and opportunities for children to practise and develop their speaking skills (*paragraphs 4, 16, 17, 20, 24, 57*);
    - providing more opportunities for children to handle books carefully, to choose books, to follow texts and to use the book corners (*paragraphs 4, 24, 58*);
    - providing more opportunities for children to practise and develop their mathematical skills (*paragraphs 5, 25, 63*).
  - II. raise the effectiveness of children's role play by involving adults more frequently in the activities and giving children opportunities for them to talk about their role play activities** (*paragraphs 10, 16, 80*);
  - III. improve the assessment of children's attainment on entry by:**

- moderating the assessments using an external source (*paragraphs 1, 38, 45*).

**OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL:**

- improve further children's initiative and personal development by providing more opportunities for children to be given responsibility (*paragraphs 13, 28, 52*).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	68	28	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)	90
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

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	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	53

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	10.7	School data	0.04

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)	4.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	202

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.8
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	N/A
Total expenditure	N/A
Expenditure per pupil	N/A
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	65

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	28	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	20	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	31	8	2	15
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	23	6	0	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	17	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	20	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	74	25	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	17	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	20	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	28	2	2	8

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents think very highly of the school and are happy with nearly all aspects of school life. Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views. Although in the questionnaire a few parents were not happy with the amount of homework their children were given, these views were not reflected at the parents' meeting. Inspectors agree with most parents who were happy with the books and toys children take home.

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

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

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

51. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good overall and is valued by parents. Many children enter the school with low levels of maturity and independence for their age, but they make very good progress and most achieve standards appropriate for their age by the time they are ready to leave the school. Children with special educational needs (SEN) and children with English as an additional language (EAL), who are helped to integrate well with English-speaking children, achieve well.
52. The children clearly enjoy coming to school and relationships with staff are very good. Clearly understood routines and high expectations encourage attentiveness, good behaviour, politeness and concentration. These routines give the youngest and the most reserved children confidence and security. Children willingly take on little jobs such as handing out fruit and returning registers, and would appreciate more opportunities to take other responsibilities. They listen to their teachers and follow instructions well. Children show consideration in taking turns in using equipment and toys. They understand, for example, that an egg timer by the computer helps to share its use fairly. They also show an understanding of the need for care when climbing on apparatus or using equipment. Before physical activity, most children are able to remove their socks and shoes. After the activity most are able to put their socks on again, with some managing to put on their shoes independently.
53. Children generally get on well with each other and play sociably alongside others, but they tend to play independently within the group, with little shared conversation about their play.
54. The teaching supporting this area of learning is good. Good features include a team commitment to consistently high expectations and thorough planning to address the children's needs. All staff contribute to the very secure, friendly environment and value the children and their learning. Displays and resources reflect and celebrate the diverse school community, encouraging all children to take pride in their heritage. Staff focus well on developing sociability, reinforcing listening skills and extending the children's vocabulary. They recognise that many children lack confidence or experience in sociable play and in independence. They promote both by ensuring that equipment such as tricycles and scooters and other resources are easily accessible at appropriate times. However, teachers and other staff do not consistently build on children's answers when speaking about themselves and their experiences.

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

55. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below those normally found. All children, including those with SEN and EAL, make good progress overall. Because of their low level on entry, their attainment is below the expected standards in speaking and reading by the time they leave the school and they are unlikely to achieve the goals in these aspects of the area of learning by the end of the foundation stage. Although this level of attainment is lower than at the time of the previous inspection, the school has maintained the good progress reported then.
56. Most children's listening skills are at least in line with those expected and a minority is above the expected levels. Most children, even the youngest three-year-olds, listen very attentively, showing great interest, particularly during some story-times. Most children listen to, and follow, instructions in order to carry out activities appropriately. Their listening skills enhance their learning and children are on course to achieve the goals in this aspect by the end of the Foundation Stage.
57. Children's speaking skills are below those expected for their age. Even the oldest four-year-olds give one-word answers to questions or nod in response to questions from visiting adults. Some are

shy but overall, children's speaking is undeveloped. They do not easily communicate with other children or adults. On a few occasions children voluntarily spoke to their peers while in groups or in pairs. Older three-year-olds and some four-year-olds are able to talk about their own experiences and anecdotes, for example, *"My dad bought some strawberries"* and *"We have oranges at home"* in the context of the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. Some children are clearly not used to speaking, especially the younger ones with EAL. Nursery nurses report that they say more and are more confident with known adults. Children are given frequent opportunities to listen and extend their vocabulary, for example, during story telling and other whole-class or small group activities. However, staff do not always make the best use of these opportunities to encourage children to speak or to initiate discussion. Opportunities for children to initiate speaking in role and imaginative play are infrequent and many cannot express their wants or needs confidently.

58. Although children are developing their knowledge of stories and books appropriately, there are not enough opportunities given for handling and choosing books to raise standards to expected levels. Many children, including the youngest, know what an 'author' and 'title' is; for example, an author *"makes the pages"*. Some children know what an illustrator does. A number of four-year-olds know and use the terms 'pages' and 'lines' accurately. Almost all enjoy stories and storytelling sessions. They listen to the book being read and are able to name features of the story. For example, they were able to say that the hungry caterpillar *"is not fat at the end"*. Individual children can comment on the content of the stories or recognise individual words such as 'zoo' in 'Dear Zoo'. In one story, the older three-year-olds and younger four-year-olds joined in the repetitive parts of the story voluntarily. The book corners were insufficiently used during the inspection to develop children's early reading skills. Parents and carers contribute to their children's reading development through the use of the home library and reading books. This is a valuable resource and almost all families take advantage of it.
59. Children recognise their names, some with adult support, and place these on a board to help with the register. They are learning to make marks with various implements such as pencils, felt tips, crayons and know the names of these markers. Older children are learning to handle pencils well, and individual children are learning to form letters correctly. Individual children can use a computer program and mouse to click on matching letters. There are few opportunities for them to make marks or write independently in other areas of learning, for example, in role or imaginative play. Attainment is broadly up to the standards expected and children are on course to achieve the goals in writing by the time they leave the Foundation Stage.
60. The quality of teaching is good, overall. All staff introduce and reinforce specialist language very well, for example, *"Behind the door; in front of the picture"*. Staff encourage the development of good listening skills. The teachers and nursery nurses work plan and work very well together and with children to support their learning. A nursery nurse worked well supporting an EAL child with a small group of children as role models, sitting with them and encouraging conversation through good questioning, such as *"What colour is this?"* and at the start of the session, *"Now, how many children have we got?"* The small group, including the EAL child, was able to count, *"One, two, three, four, five."* All the children benefited from this experience. Rooms are well organised and are well resourced. Children respond well to the good teaching and their attitudes and behaviour are good. Most sit quietly when necessary and all are keen to participate in all activities.

## **Mathematical development**

61. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for children when they are three. Although they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, standards are still below those expected by the time they leave the school and are unlikely to achieve the learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. These levels of attainment are lower than those found at the time of the previous inspection, although in a significant minority of observations, the attainment of the older children was in line with expected standards.
62. Older children are beginning to sort, match and count. They are learning to say and recognise numbers and words describing numbers. Four-year-old children are able to say if a clay snake is long or short. They are able to arrange dolls, purses and boxes in order of size and can say that the bigger ones will not fit into smaller ones. They are developing the concept of size further, with their



vocabulary being extended by being introduced to comparative adjectives such as long, longer, and large, larger. Older three-year-olds and younger four-year-olds are able to count and sort plastic vehicles into the same colour with help from an adult, and three-year-old children can recognise colours such as red, blue, green but are not always able to name them. Individual children can press single-digit numbers on a calculator and use the computer mouse to click on matching shapes. In a small group of older children working with a nursery nurse, attainment is up to the expected standard. The children placed magnetic numbers on to the correct squares on a number board and correctly identified numbers from one to nine. In another small group, two girls under the direction of a nursery nurse were working with shapes. They were able to name circle and triangle, but not rectangle.

63. Staff provided a range of interesting but limited activities in the rooms or the outside area and garden, for example, those planned for the airport simulation, such as buying and selling tickets and seat numbers. But for most of the inspection there were few activities planned to promote children's mathematical development. The school's explanation is that because of the unusually good weather the emphasis in the curriculum was placed on outdoor activities. Such a strategy would still not have prevented mathematical activities taking place in the large outdoor play area, as indeed the airport simulation in the play area proved. On the final day, a good range of adult-supported and planned number, shape and size activities was made available. However, it is clear from the generally good progress made by the children that the relatively few activities seen during the inspection week were not typical of provision. However, more opportunities still need to be provided to bring standards up to the expected levels.
64. In the limited amount of lessons seen the quality of teaching was good overall. Staff planned very thoroughly for the limited amount of provision and there was good deployment of all support staff. Staff promote children's learning well through good, patient intervention. Teachers place good emphasis on developing children's technical vocabulary in mathematics. Children enjoyed the activities and their attitudes are good.

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

65. For the majority entering the nursery, knowledge and understanding of the world is below that found in most children aged three. However, they make progress because of good planning and teaching, with particular strengths in the provision for, and progress in, science-related activities and information and communication technology. By the time they are ready to leave the nursery the standards of children, including those with EAL, are up to those expected for this age. Children with SEN make good progress in relation to prior attainment.
66. Children have regular access to computers and are developing sound skills in using the mouse, on-screen menus and voice instructions in programs. For example, they carefully match objects with their initial letters, or select items of clothing to dress a character on the screen. Older children work successfully on matching and naming letters of the alphabet. Children are also learning how to use graphics programs to create pictures and patterns. With help, the older children are able to add their names, and some are able to print their work independently. While they only talk briefly about their work, they answer simple questions, sometimes pointing to the screen display to further explain what they are doing.
67. Children were observed using a programmable floor robot on a floor map for the first time. They were enthralled by the way they could program the device to move in different directions. In the process they developed a good understanding of direction and related terms such as "backwards", "forwards", "right" and "left". In other activities, such as the airport simulation, children used a keyboard and telephone effectively, contributing to their role play.
68. Science-related activities have been well supported by a project with an international oil company and by visits to the Science Museum to enhance this aspect of the curriculum. Children were fascinated by an activity involving an electrical circuit where they linked crocodile clips to a battery to make a small propeller rotate. Many could name the items accurately and were able to recognise why the crocodile clip was so named from its shape: "*it looks like a crocodile*". They experimented with breaking and reconnecting the circuit to stop and start the propeller. Children were similarly fascinated by the decorative effect created by holding a colouring pen steady as a

small paper disc rotated. In a related activity, children were shown alternative ways to make a paper aeroplane fly, such as by using a finger, by blowing, or by using air pressure in a tube. While most children did not speak very much about these activities, they clearly understood and followed instructions well. There was focused support from a nursery nurse for an above average child. In discussion she skilfully led the young boy to draw on his wide vocabulary and his ability to articulate his ideas clearly as he played with the aeroplanes.

69. Children have a positive experience of food preparation and cookery, often supported by parent volunteers. Children regularly help cut and distribute fruit to their class, using knives carefully. In a cookery session, pupils with EAL identified correctly the fruit they were working with, such as mango, passion fruit and pineapple. In response to the nursery nurse's questioning, a child imaginatively described the smell of an orange as being, *"like fresh air"*. Children understand the basic rules of hygiene, including the need for clean hands and care with preparation.
70. Children are developing a sound awareness of time and of their locality and the wider world. The airport simulation developed their experience of travel effectively. They "checked in", collected tickets and moved luggage to the aeroplane. They were able to name the places they wanted to go to such as "Africa" and "London" and "My house". When looking at a local map, a child pointed to where she lived and spoke of it *"being in the world"*.
71. Children can name the country where a piece of music or a song they are singing comes from and are developing a good understanding of their own and other people's cultures and beliefs. In other activities, construction and making skills are developing satisfactorily, for example, using building blocks and modelling clay, but children need to be encouraged to spend more time and to sustain effort on some tasks, such as junk modelling. Children develop their understanding and knowledge of plants through sowing seeds and watching them grow.
72. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Activities are very well planned. Introductions, explanations and questions link well with, and reinforce, earlier learning. Support staff and volunteer helpers, such as the parent volunteers in the airport simulation and cookery sessions, are very well deployed and supported. There is good access to all activities, so that when, for example, a child from another class is attracted to an activity in another, they are welcomed and involved. The airport simulation was available to all children. There is a particularly good emphasis on using the right technical terms in activities, such as "robot" and "crocodile clips", and in describing temperatures, direction and the properties of materials to extend the children's vocabulary. Resources are well selected and of good quality.

## **Physical development**

73. The majority of children make good progress in developing their skills in controlling their hand-eye co-ordination in, for example, putting on aprons, handling jigsaw puzzles, sorting small toys and in using scissors, paintbrushes and pencils. Most children demonstrate satisfactory skill when running, climbing, jumping and using tricycles and scooters. Overall progress in this area of learning is good and older children, including those with EAL and SEN, are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
74. Children showed a developing ability in rolling and directing a ball accurately to reach the child they had nominated to receive it. Most children quickly learned to use appropriate force. When asked how they used a ball at home, a child showed a need for care by saying, *"I use it in the garden, so I don't break nothing"*. When asked why they should roll and not throw the ball, a child replied that as they were sitting down, a thrown ball might hit them. For this activity, children had removed their socks and shoes. Most were able to put their socks on again, with some managing to put on their shoes independently as well.
75. The excellent outdoor play space has a varied choice of climbing and riding equipment and other physical activity areas. Children have plenty of room to move about and make good use of the space. While all physical activity is well supervised by staff, the children can use the apparatus and equipment independently and carefully and show an awareness of safety rules. An example is the sensible way children behave when younger and less confident peers join them in climbing and sliding on the frames.

76. Outdoor activities include a popular tennis area, where children can develop and practice their throwing, serving and batting abilities, a few with noticeable skill for their age. Children show some awareness in their instructions to each other that this is a game, with ways of playing and rules to follow: *"stay over that side to play a proper game"*. They play sensibly, show persistence and the beginnings of reviewing each other's performance: *"that was a good one"*, and *"that was too high"*.
77. Outdoor equipment includes tricycles and scooters for riding and pushchairs to transport dolls and teddies. While boys tend to use the cycle and scooters more competitively than the girls, both boys and girls use the pushchairs for their toys with equal care and interest.
78. The teaching for physical development is good. Sessions are well planned and organised and staff work as an effective team. At the climbing frame area, staff encourage and motivate children to explore different movements as they cross the frames. Less confident children are well supported in attempting new movements. Support for the tennis area included good demonstrations and explanations to improve children's skills. The need to play safely and for taking turns fairly is regularly reinforced. Questioning is effective in extending children's knowledge and understanding of physical activity, safety and a related vocabulary. The equipment and other resources for physical development are plentiful and of very good quality.

### **Creative development**

79. Progress in the creative aspects overall is good and children achieve standards broadly in line with those expected for their age, including those children with EAL. Children with SEN make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
80. Children have a wide range of creative activities, successfully enhanced by the school improvement focus on raising standards in creative development. However, while children have regular opportunities for imaginative role play, a number appear to lack the experience or confidence to be as imaginative or to express their ideas in role play as might be expected for their age. They would benefit from more prompting, intervention and support from adults. For example, the allocation of character parts and encouraging dressing up would help to develop this imaginative aspect further.
81. Music is a strong feature, with daily experiences of singing and opportunities to use untuned percussion instruments. Children know a range of familiar songs, including songs from other countries which they are able to name. They sing tunefully and are learning to modulate their voices and to sing softly or loudly according to the requirements of the song. They can perform action songs with enthusiasm and are developing skills in singing in rounds songs such as "London's Burning". Children can also recognise a familiar tune when the rhythm is clapped by their teacher. They are learning to co-ordinate their singing with their untuned percussion accompaniment. Children handle their instruments carefully, are able to name them and can show how they are held, indicating the sounds they make.
82. They compose pictures and collages and model in three dimensions using a range of resources. Children cut and stick papers and fabrics carefully to produce collages and this helps them experience textures and materials. The majority have a sound knowledge of colours and a growing confidence in using different media and tools creatively, including the computer.
83. Children produce good work in marble effect painting, and with appropriate emphasis on skills development, their work improved noticeably between the first and second attempts. Some particularly good examples of self-portraits and supported poetry writing were seen in collections of children's work. In 3-dimensional modelling with clay, they showed growing confidence in handling the medium and exploring its properties. In a session with a specialist volunteer, children worked the clay well to create good quality small coil and pinch pots using the techniques of firming and smoothing they were being taught. In one modelling session, a child created a tiny crucifix, saying, *"This is Jesus"* and that she had seen him *"in church"*. She also modelled another shape, saying, *"This is Noah who helped the animals when it rained"*.
84. The airport simulation provided a good example of supported role-play, with children taking roles as pilots, receptionists and customers. When using outdoor equipment such as pedal tricycles and

scooters, the children - mostly boys - imagined themselves as racers or as “*attacking the monsters*”. In a home area, children were seen occasionally organising others in tasks. However, while the majority of children played in groups, they did not often relate to or involve others in their play or conversation.

85. The quality of teaching of this area of learning is good, particularly where there is an emphasis on teaching skills, such as in the marble effect painting and in clay modelling. However, children would benefit from additional skills teaching to support junk modelling. A purposeful learning environment is established and there are good expectations that children will do their best. Teachers and nursery nurses plan well together and give good support to children. When a child in a small group working with soft clay wants to walk off because he is upset, the nursery nurse handles the situation well, calling him back gently to discuss the reason for the upset. There is an effective emphasis on appropriate technical vocabulary, for example, musical terminology, with children knowing the correct terms for the musical instruments. However, some music sessions have too much content, containing a large number of songs when concentration on a smaller number would be more effective.
86. Resources for all creative activities are good, particularly for music and the use of computers for graphics work.