

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RACHEL McMILLAN NURSERY SCHOOL**

McMillan Street, Deptford

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number: 100097

Headteacher: Ms F Marriott

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock  
21261

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 196627

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	McMillan Street Deptford London
Postcode:	SE8 3EH
Telephone number:	020 8692 4041
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Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Christopher Phillips
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup> February 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	Equality of opportunity English as an additional language Personal and social development Creative development	Standards Teaching
8933	John Chapman	Lay inspector		Behaviour and attitudes Care and welfare of pupils Partnership with parents
7336	Lindsay Howard	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematical development Physical development	Leadership and management
10144	Mary Marriott	Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world	Curriculum

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rachel McMillan Nursery School is situated just off a major route between Greenwich and central London. It mainly serves the boroughs of Greenwich (in which it is situated) and Lewisham, which is adjacent. Because of local authorities' different policies for transfer to Reception classes, children stay in the Nursery for between three and five terms. They start in the term following their third birthday, mostly on a part-time basis. At the time of the inspection, 154 children were on roll, approximately 79 per cent as full-time pupils. On entry, many children are assessed as having poor skills, most notably in the areas of personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. Children's backgrounds reflect the diversity within their local community: they bring with them a rich variety of languages, cultures and faiths. Approximately 76 per cent of children are of minority ethnic origin, the largest proportion being of African heritage. Yoruba, Somalian, Ibo and Igbo are listed as the four main languages spoken other than English. Approximately 57 per cent of children learn English as an additional language. Around 30 per cent receive bilingual support through Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding. Approximately 6 per cent of children are Refugees. About 34 per cent are eligible for free school meals. Just over 8 per cent have special educational needs. A small proportion (around 0.5 per cent) has a Statement of special need. Some of these proportions are high, although comparable figures relating to Nursery schools are not available. There is a fair degree of transience among the school's pupil-population.

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

The school is very effective. It provides high quality education for three and four-year-olds. A diversity of languages, cultures and faiths within the school and its surrounding community is valued as an asset. The school provides a safe environment where children feel confident that adults are interested in them as individuals and assured of being at the centre of adults' thinking. Consequently, they frequently achieve good standards in all areas of learning. At times, standards reached are very good, especially in relation to their personal and social development (noted as a matter of concern when children start school). This is due to teaching, which is most frequently good and is never less than satisfactory. The headteacher and her deputy provide very good leadership and management. The headteacher's clear-sighted, educational vision is founded in her in-depth understanding of the needs of Nursery age children. It is also informed by her commitment to ensuring that equality of educational opportunity is realised through the school's daily practices. Senior managers, staff members and governors share a commitment to this vision.

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

- Children frequently achieve good standards in all areas of learning by the time they leave Nursery.
- Children's positive attitudes towards and enthusiasm for the school are excellent. They reach high standards in behaviour and personal development because of teachers<sup>1</sup> very high expectations.
- Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the way young children learn underpins children's good behaviour and high standards.
- The school is an 'inclusive' school, so *all* children achieve well in relation to their prior learning.
- Ongoing, structured monitoring through close observation of children by all teachers informs their planning and leads directly to the good standards achieved.
- Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The headteacher and her deputy provide very good leadership and management. The headteacher's far-sighted educational vision, built on striving for excellence, is shared by all staff and governors.
- Governors work hard on behalf of the school, within constraints imposed by the local education authority acting as the controlling body.
- Information to parents about the school, particularly with regard to children's progress, is excellent.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good and seen as crucially important to children's successful overall development. Parents have a very positive view of the school.
- The care and welfare of children is a high priority for all staff. Children are happy in school. They feel safe and secure and know that they are valued and respected.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Teacher' is used in the widest sense throughout the Report since many 'significant others' interact with children, including class teachers, Nursery Nurses, Primary Helpers, Bilingual Assistant and Learning Support Assistant for special educational needs.

### What could be improved

- There are no areas highlighted for improvement as key issues.

*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 addressed key issues identified for action in the previous inspection Report (February, 1999) to very good effect. It has substantially improved its curricular provision. Recently, policies and schemes of work have been further revised in line with the latest guidance from the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (in relation to the Early Learning Goals for the foundation stage). A school improvement plan sets suitable priorities. Time-lines for these, together with staff members' responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating, are clearly set out. In-service provision is very well covered in separate documentation and is matched carefully to known priorities. Within the limits of a small delegated budget, planning is realistically costed. The role of the governing body continues to be constrained by its not having overall control for strategic management purposes, since the local authority is the controlling body. Staff continue to work at improving attendance and punctuality. Attendance, especially, is steadily improving. Much refurbishment has been completed and related matters highlighted in the previous Report are well in hand. However, not all planned refurbishments have taken place (these are not in the school's control). The role of senior managers has been strengthened through the creation of a senior management team, led by the headteacher in close partnership with her deputy. The quality of teaching has continued to improve with a consequent effect on standards achieved. The school has also continued to strengthen its partnership with parents. Home visits are now in place, prior to children starting school.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in	
Communication, language and literacy	B
Mathematics	B
Personal and social development	A
Other areas of the curriculum	B

<b>Key</b>	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D

Judgements in the table relate to older four-year-olds remaining in the Nursery for at least another half term. Some children will not transfer to their Primary school until September. All children go in to a Reception class and many pass another school year before they are assessed for the Early Learning Goals prior to starting in Key Stage 1. Against this background, judgements reflect good standards reached relative to 'stepping stones' for communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Some children will reach many of the relevant goals in both these areas before they leave Nursery. Children develop very good speaking and listening skills. They know how books 'work' and enjoy reading. They come to recognise letters and know letter-sounds when spelling out their own names. They acquire good 'emergent' writing skills. The oldest know numbers to ten. They grasp how to add numbers on ('how many more than 6 to make 9?') and learn to subtract numbers through singing action rhymes. Higher attainers have a sound knowledge of numbers well beyond ten. Children learn a suitable mathematics vocabulary for weighing, measuring and comparing one set of objects with another. They acquire very good personal and social skills. Older children frequently show a maturity beyond their years in the way they organise co-operative activities. They persist with chosen tasks for long periods of time. They develop good skills in relation to their knowledge and understanding of the world and in the areas of physical and creative development. They are lively and enquiring and like to find out how things work. Older children confidently climb the many types of fixed climbing frames available to them. They use a very wide range of tools and construction toys in their play and so develop good manipulative skills. They mix colours and paint with verve. At times, older children's paintings are of a high standard, as when they paint portraits.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Children enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children move around shelters and outdoor play spaces purposefully. They share toys and equipment productively.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children demonstrate high levels of independence in choosing and organising activities. They make very good relationships with one another and with adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

When children enter their shelters<sup>2</sup>, almost all become busy finding out what is on offer and choosing what to do. A few of the youngest need reassurance about leaving a parent or a carer, but teachers' skilled support helps them join quickly in activities with others. Children work well alongside each other and when negotiating joint play. They are considerate and seek help from adults with assurance, talking to them about things they have done or which interest them. They know adults will reciprocate with interest and listen to what the children have to say.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Children aged 3 to 4 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Teaching is most frequently of good or better quality. Just over a half of all teaching (54 per cent) was judged good, with a further 17 per cent judged very good. No teaching was less than satisfactory. Judgements are based on observing teachers, Nursery Nurses and Primary Helpers working with children across a range of settings (as in whole class or group work). Consistently good quality interactions were observed between 'significant' adults and children supported for specific purposes (such as children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language). Teachers have very good insights into how young children develop and progress in all areas of learning. They teach basic skills relating to literacy and numeracy well. Such teaching permeates all curricular planning. It is securely founded in first-hand experience. Teachers create stimulating environments in shelters and outdoor spaces to capitalise on children's curiosity. Planning is geared to helping children become independent learners, able to understand how to choose and gain good powers of concentration. It takes very good account of the needs of children learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, including children with Statements of special need. Fundamentally, teachers plan to include all children. Daily meetings for planning purposes are of a high quality, revealing how well teachers know all their pupils and plan perceptively to meet individuals' needs. Teachers' written observations on children are also of a high quality. They inform children's developmental records and provide a very good picture of progress over time.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'shelter' used throughout the report refers to the classrooms where children are taught. The term has its origin in the history of the Rachel McMillan Nursery.





## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Curricular planning is well founded in providing good quality, first-hand experience, well matched to children's needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children make good progress because of careful planning and good quality support. The co-ordinator for special needs has very good expertise.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. They make good progress. Children's needs are well understood. Bilingual support is of good quality and deployed effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Particular strengths are evident in provision for children's moral, social and cultural development. Teachers build positively on the diversity of experiences children bring with them in to the Nursery.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The care and welfare of children is at the centre of adults' concerns. Children feel safe and secure. They know they are valued.

The school's partnership with parents is very good. It is firmly rooted in a view of parents and carers as being of prime importance to children's successful development. The quality of information given to parents, especially regarding children's progress, is excellent. A strength of curricular planning is the way individuals' different learning needs are taken properly into account. Principles relating to equality of educational opportunity inform all aspects of the school's provision and are to the fore in matters of care and welfare of children.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The partnership between the head and her deputy greatly benefits the school. Other senior managers work hard in support of shared goals and provide valued expertise in helping to move the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors have a limited remit, being constrained by the local education authority's overall control of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall, with some very good features. Senior managers monitor and evaluate all aspects of provision rigorously, particularly the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. The school now has control of a small budget and manages this to good effect in relation to priorities identified in planning.

Although governors are limited in what they can do relative to the school's strategic development, they fully support its aims and values. They are diligent in pursuing the school's interests. There is sufficient staff to meet the needs of the age-range taught. Staff members are well-trained for the varied roles they fulfil. Accommodation is very good overall, although some planned refurbishment has still to take place. Good quality learning resources are plentiful to meet curricular needs. The direction provided by the headteacher, about what constitutes excellence in Nursery education, is a basis for the very good leadership and management provided by her and her deputy. Within the limits of the small budget under its direct control, the school seeks consistently to apply principles of best value.



## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The standards children achieve.</li> <li>• Children's enthusiasm for school.</li> <li>• How children are taught to share toys and care for each other.</li> <li>• The way adults respect and value children.</li> <li>• Teachers' ready availability to talk about children.</li> <li>• Open access to children's records.</li> <li>• The strength of home/school partnerships.</li> <li>• The school's calm welcoming, ethos. Children are always seen to be busy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work children take home.</li> <li>• Information about children's progress.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. In the pre-inspection meeting, these reflected the findings of the questionnaire. Almost everyone present (28 attended) supported one parent's statement "This is a shining light in the Nursery world". Inspectors findings do not uphold a minority view relating to homework and the inadequacy of information about children's progress. Children can borrow and take home books that interest and stimulate them each day. They are encouraged to find out about things relating to their classroom work. The school makes every effort to keep parents well-informed about how their children are getting on and does so successfully.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to school, children's attainment varies. The school's well-established practice of rigorously observing individuals ensures evidence is collected for assessing levels of skill, knowledge and understanding achieved in all designated areas of learning. These areas are: social and personal development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. Significantly, at the end of a 'settling in' period (six weeks), most children are found to attain below what might be expected for their age in all these areas. Their attainments in social and personal development (including emotional development) and in communication, language and literacy are assessed as poor. Many are judged to need support to raise their self-esteem before they can take full advantage of Nursery provision and become effective in school as independent learners. As a means of furthering their expressive powers and establishing important early literacy skills, children's speaking skills, in particular, need fostering beyond the one or two word sentences commonly heard during these early days.
2. Inspection evidence supports a picture outlining generally low levels of attainment on entry to Nursery (that is, as these relate to communication, language and literacy, mathematical and social and personal development). Therefore, the youngest children need more support than older peers in settling to listen in a group or in taking turns during a game. They find it hard to sit quietly in a circle and focus on a story for even a brief period of time, despite finding the story itself interesting. Most respond well to a teacher's insistence that everyone looks at pictures and listens carefully 'so everyone can hear', but one or two are clearly 'put out' at not getting more personal attention. Teachers' explanations and questioning about what is acceptable behaviour are integral to their interactions with children. Their professional skills help children develop a real understanding of what is involved in being members of a community. These children soon begin to move towards the high standards ultimately expected of them. All children make very good progress in these critical areas of social and personal development. In fact, at the time of the inspection, indications were that many older four-year-olds will achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal and social development before transfer to a Reception class. For example, they show themselves as very able to choose and organise their own activities, and persist with these, as well as negotiate shared play.
3. In communication, language and literacy, the youngest children frequently signal how well they recognise what adults say through their body language. Sometimes, they use single-word responses to direct questions, or take appropriate actions by undertaking a task and following instructions rather than engaging in extended conversation. For most, being able to respond in such ways represents good progress since entry to Nursery at the beginning of the Spring term. Their 'mark-making' (as a precursor to emergent writing) is immature. It consists, mainly, of random marks or 'scribbles' which they cannot yet link directly to a meaningful activity. By contrast, older children reply, articulately, to questions when engaged in writing a letter to the zoo ("('it says) a baby giraffe and a baby camel"). They listen attentively to a teacher's explanation about the letter sounds in 'camel', picking out the letters correctly on an alphabet display. One girl writes 'cml' into her sentence as a result. Generally, the oldest children have very good speaking and listening skills, which they use across the curriculum. They also have a good grasp of early reading skills. They turn pages correctly, 'tell' a familiar story in sequence by referring to the pictures and recognise some words in the most familiar texts. They can write their names correctly. High-attaining children are beginning to group letter strings into words to form sentences in emergent writing. They can also sometimes write simple words correctly. Overall, these older children achieve well for their age relative to designated 'stepping stones' in the Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy. Indications are that they are in line to achieve these goals by the end of their Reception year. Some are set to achieve them by the time they leave the Nursery.
4. By carefully structuring opportunities for children to engage in purposeful play, adults promote sound mathematical development across areas of learning, as well as planning specifically for mathematical concepts. Inspection evidence suggests that most children are well in line to reach the Early Learning Goals in mathematics by the end of the Reception year. Higher attaining children are set to

achieve the goals, particularly as these relate to number, by the time they leave the Nursery. Regular 'end-of-session' exercises reinforce knowledge of number in ways all enjoy. For example, children sequence numbers 1 to 10 through counting games and songs. They learn how to 'take' a number away from another by singing that "five little ducks went swimming one day", until no more ducks are left. As a matter of course, children count how many take part in activities (such as at the sand tray) to check whether they can join in. They compare one set of objects with another to find out which set contains the 'most' or the 'least' and use the language of measurement and capacity to decide whether a jug is 'full' yet. Such learning integrates smoothly within many curricular activities. For example, tricycles are numbered and 'parked' in order, ready for outside play.

5. Prior to starting Nursery, children's knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their home environment is limited. Through the wealth of experiences 'built in' to Nursery shelters, the outside play areas and gardens, together with the many opportunities children have to extend learning beyond the school, they make very good progress in this area. Teachers organise experiences so as to highlight cross-curricular links in ways stimulating children's curiosity, helping them lay foundations for developing investigative and experimental skills. At the time of the inspection, most older four-year-olds were judged to be well along the route towards achieving relevant Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the Reception year. Some will achieve these goals before they transfer to their Reception class. Three-year-olds watch, carefully, as a teacher shows them different baby foods connected with their studies of how babies grow. One boy says "I don't like this" as he tastes a sample, although he cannot expand on his statement or explain it. Older three-year-olds are becoming aware of different climates. They know that polar bears live where it is "very, very cold". They experimentally bang blocks of ice with a tool because "ice cracks". Four-year-olds follow up a visit to a baby clinic by talking knowledgeably about the records nurses keep and how babies are weighed and checked. Children acquire very good computer skills. Across the age-range, they use a mouse to click on icons, dip a brush in colour and drag it to make lines or fill the screen with the colour chosen. The oldest children can do this deliberately. They achieve a range of colour and paint effects. They can also select letters for their name from a computer keyboard.
6. Children enter the nursery with under-developed physical skills. Through their time in school, they make good progress along the 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals for all aspects of physical development. Some children will reach most of these goals by the time they leave the Nursery, others are in line to reach them by the end of their Reception Year. The planned availability in the Nursery of a stimulating range of tools, materials and construction toys supports the development of children's manipulative, fine motor skills very well, both in shelters and outside. The many kinds of wheeled toys and climbing frames are deployed successfully in helping the development of gross motor skills during outdoor play. A three-year-old was seen working out how much pressure to apply to the pedals of her trike to make it run easily up slight slopes as well as along flat surfaces. Four-year-olds pedal their trikes confidently, weaving in and out of the equipment, manoeuvring adeptly around 'hidden' corners, unaware of the 'ups' and 'downs' of surfaces and delighting in their control.
7. Children also make good progress in creative development. Most are set to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Reception year, with some achieving most goals by the time they leave Nursery. Three-year-olds are seen making simple brush strokes or 'scrubbing' colour over the surface of paper to create effects of personal interest whilst exploring how to mix paints. Older children can represent their observations of objects carefully and record what they see with credible accuracy (seen in the representations of a carrot and a radish in one shelter). Older children also reach very high standards in portrait painting, mixing and applying skin colour with care and placing features correctly. Children enjoy participating in role-play and older four-year-olds show how well they can adopt different points of view. For example, a girl held a shower-head to shampoo a customer's hair in a hairdressing salon (making sure the customer put her head backwards over the bowl) and directed a boy about how he should behave as a customer, waiting his turn. Children learn a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes by heart. They can sing in tune with an adult and keep time together.
8. Children for whom English is an additional language make good progress and frequently attain in line with their peers. This is owed, in part, to the good quality support children receive through specialist help matched to children's first languages. More generally, it is owed to teachers' good knowledge

and understanding of the needs of developing bilingual<sup>3</sup> children. These teachers' expertise is evident in provision throughout the Nursery. It shows itself in the way children readily participate in activities alongside their monolingual peers. Similarly, children with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, make good progress because of carefully targeted specialist support and teachers' good quality planning to meet identified needs. They attain at least in line with their prior attainment and, at times, do better than might be expected.

9. It is difficult to make a direct comparison between current findings in relation to children's attainment and those reported in the previous inspection, since the curriculum for children under five has changed. Broadly, findings about children's attainment on entry are similar to previous findings. Evidence indicates that the school's work on continuing to improve the quality of teaching and addressing curricula issues identified in the previous inspection has had an impact on raising standards.

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

10. Children's enthusiasm and attitudes to school are excellent. They enjoy both their work and their play. One parent complained that her child wakes up on Saturday morning demanding to be taken to Nursery!
11. Children grasp routines well. They settle quickly into their shelters at the start of sessions and focus well on their chosen activities. For example, a four-year-old was seen writing continuously for 30 minutes, as a self-initiated task, with great concentration. When children tire of one activity, they move smoothly to another, usually without prompting or need for adult intervention. As they pass by tables and areas of interest indoors, or move around outdoor play spaces, they stop to watch and listen to others involved in an activity, or choose to initiate their own play. They assess situations cautiously before deciding whether or not to join in. They know they will be welcomed where work is adult-led and will be included in co-operative play by peers. To illustrate, when four of the youngest children came into a shelter from outside play, they stopped, one-by-one, to watch older children writing. Interested in what the teacher was saying and what the older children were busy doing, they found extra chairs and sat down to take part. Children have many stimulating activities open to them and make good use of options provided for them to choose what they do. They are highly motivated and constantly busy. They work independently with adults and with their peers. Children with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, are helped to extend their concentration on chosen activities through the judicious support of watchful adults. Similarly, children with English as an additional language soon become assured at deciding how to begin their day because of supportive adults. A girl on the verge of distress at saying "goodbye" to the person who brought her was comforted by a Primary Helper. She sat at a drawing and writing table, where she was quickly engaged in talking about making a card by the Helper.
12. Behaviour is very good overall. Children sit quietly through stories and younger three-year-olds, who can sometimes find this hard, respond well to adults' firm support. They quickly settle and become involved. For example, children became absolutely still when a Nursery Nurse reminded them they only had a short time in the library for a favourite story. Later, they thoroughly enjoyed choosing their own books to share with friends or adults, or to read quietly by themselves. During whole-class sessions, children most frequently listen attentively to adults. They are happy to 'speak up' when answering questions or making their views known. They like to join in number rhymes and songs often sung at these times. Their very good behaviour contributes to an atmosphere where each child works hard and learns without undue distractions.
13. The personal development of all children and their capacity to make positive relationships with others, peers and adults is very good. At times, older children especially display maturity beyond their years. They play co-operatively and discuss aspects of this seriously when difficulties arise. For example, four children wanted to be hairdressers in a salon with only one customer. Quickly realising the logistical problems this fact created, they considered how they could manage since none wanted to be another customer. Subsequently, the customer had her 'hair' (a wig) attended to by all four. She willingly subjected herself to a vigorous turn-taking as her hairdressers commented freely on the

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<sup>3</sup> It is recognised that children may have access to more than one language at home and may have varying levels of competence in these as well as in English for speaking and listening purposes. At times, children with languages in addition to English will be referred to in the Report as 'bilingual' for ease of reference.

different techniques employed! Although younger children can find it hard to share, they respond well to adults' interventions. They learn not to take a tricycle away from someone else until the other child's 'turn' is over. Because adults keep to time-schedules meticulously, children know their needs will soon be met. Children are conscious of one another when they play. For example, all know not to bump into others and show good control when using wheeled toys at speed. They are thoughtful of each other's feelings and needs. They realise when someone is unhappy (perhaps because a parent or carer is leaving at the start of a session) and tolerate the extra time adults then give to the anxious child. No signs of oppressive behaviour are evident. Relationships between children and between children and adults are very good. Adults are seen as friends, there to help and appreciate good work. Children show great initiative throughout the course of each day. They will accept considerable responsibilities when laying tables for meals, serving food to each other, taking registers and messages to the school office and tidying up.

14. The school continues to work hard at improving attendance and punctuality, in line with recommendations made in the last Report. Attendance, especially, has improved since then but there has also been an improvement in children getting to school on time. There are no published figures for attendance for this age-range. However, a scrutiny of school registers shows attendance to be in the 92 per cent range, which is satisfactory. There are no specific patterns underlying non-attendance: common childhood illnesses are the usual reason for absence. At times the school is also adversely affected by the movement of families, which is unpredictable. Registers are kept in accordance with regulations. There is some evidence of lateness, but this never delays lessons. The late entry of pupils is not allowed to affect other children. There are no exclusions.

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

15. Teaching is most frequently of good or better quality. Just over a half of all teaching (54 per cent) was judged good, with a further 17 per cent judged very good. No teaching was less than satisfactory. Judgements are based on observing teachers, Nursery Nurses and Primary Helpers working with children across a range of settings (as in whole class or group work). Additionally, consistently good quality interactions were observed between 'significant' adults and children supported for specific purposes (such as children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language). In other words, there is a continuing and substantial improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching is a strength of the school. Adults' very good knowledge and understanding of how three and four-year-olds learn and their skills in successfully promoting children's development in all areas of learning feature significantly in children's sustained progress from the day they enter Nursery. It is the professional skills of the adults which guarantee that good standards are achieved.
16. An important part of provision is the way each shelter team meets daily to review and evaluate planning in light of assessing children's responses. The quality and use of teachers' ongoing assessments of children are excellent. Meetings are informed by team members' reports of what has or has not worked for individual children. Contributions are of high quality and illustrate the care given by all to close child-observation as the primary means for reaching decisions about future work. Further, discussions illustrate very well how adults build successively on children's prior achievements in ways that match known interests and enthusiasms, extending these purposefully. For example, in preparing for the following day, a class teacher asked that larger-scale diggers and similar toys be placed in a sand tray to create a building site. This was in fact a response to her perception of one child's interest noted during the course of the day.
17. Class teachers' records of points discussed during daily meetings and related adjustments of planning usefully inform weekly planning sessions with teams in 'partner' shelters. This cross-shelters approach ensures consistency in the planning and delivery of shared themes of work and the pooling of staff members' strengths. Weekly whole-staff meetings provide yet another venue for professional talk, geared to central aims of assessing individual children's development throughout the Nursery. Teachers are skilled at translating aims into practical, first-hand learning experiences that have meaning for children. They are intrinsically interested in working out how to stimulate children's powers of imagination. Their structured, highly professional interactions are a major factor in the continuing progress made towards quality teaching. They also serve well to introduce new members of staff to the aims and values, and ways of working, thought fundamental to successful Nursery practice.



18. Adults know how to promote successful learning in literacy and numeracy. As they work with children and reflect on each day's activities, they make skilled judgements about how to lead children to the next step in learning. They realise when to focus on consolidating previous experience by widening its scope. For example, through a teacher's skilled questioning, children were helped to recall a visit to a baby clinic in some detail. They began writing with a clear idea of what they wanted to say. A prime teaching objective was met when the teacher supported a developing bilingual learner and a pupil with special educational needs to help them join in with their peers. These children subsequently achieved well and made progress in developing their emergent writing skills. Teachers consistently use resources in ways well matched to different levels of need, impelling children towards one activity or another. Therefore, children's grasp of measurement is boosted through their using a variety of standard and non-standard measures. While using these measures, they strengthen their knowledge of appropriate mathematical vocabulary both for measuring and counting in sequence. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology throughout the course of each day. This technology plays an integral role in planned activities. Children develop computer skills both through self-initiated tasks (as when using a paint program) and by working with adults on targeted activities (as when using a keyboard to word-process their own names). They have good access to 'listening posts' for listening on headphones to taped stories and know how to operate such equipment for themselves.
19. Each child's need to feel valued and respected influences all decisions about teaching and learning activities. Crucial to adults' decision-making is their determination to create an environment where children willingly opt in to activities because they wish to explore the possibilities they, themselves, can see. Nursery routines are well established and children quickly learn when they are required to be members of a class group, and when they can, more frequently, choose what they will do. Adults' promote children's success in ways ensuring progress over time in each area of learning. Whilst they encourage children to join groups working on planned activities, they do not coerce participation, since this is seen as contradicting a pursuit of key educational aims. For example, a boy found it especially hard to sit and listen to a story, being distracted by model vehicles on a nearby table. He could not disengage himself sufficiently from this distraction to attend to his teacher's instructions. Recognising his difficulty, the teacher quietly signalled to a colleague to help the boy move to the table which interested him, where he could play without disturbing the larger group.
20. Where teaching is good or better, teachers work through talk linked to practical activities, well aimed at extending children's thinking and ability to express ideas. For example, a very good discussion between a teacher and a group led pupils to think hard about what animals they would choose to go in a book they were to make. They had to decide on characteristics these animals would have ("a good dog", "a bad pet"). Usually, teachers maintain a good pace in sessions, matching well to children's interests and capacities for concentration. Therefore, a teacher worked at pupils' mathematical vocabulary as they became absorbed in deciding which box was "big enough" to contain a toy bear, and whether the paper they were cutting was "big enough" to cover the box. On occasion, where teaching is no more than satisfactory, higher attaining children are insufficiently challenged. For example, older children were seen to count to ten on a one-to-one basis and to know numbers well beyond ten. Number rhymes and games at the end of the session were more appropriately aimed at children with less secure number skills.
21. The quality of teaching for children with special educational needs is always good. Planning is well matched to their needs and ensures children can participate in all activities alongside their peers. Individual education plans for children with special needs, including for those with Statements of special need, consist of small, achievable steps geared to the needs identified. Where necessary, specific activities are planned to make sure children reach set targets. Adults praise children for progress and regularly reassure them. For example, a boy was helped by a learning support assistant to play with his choice of 'small world' toys on a table-top. Through this support, he extended his attention span as he made suitable noises for cars while moving them along the 'road'. Other children were similarly engaged alongside him. The quality of teaching for bilingual children is also consistently good. Specialist support is well targeted at children in the early stages of acquiring necessary English language skills. A bilingual assistant's interaction with some children using their first languages ensures they adjust easily to Nursery routines. It also supports the development of home languages so that children build on their knowledge of English more readily. For example, the assistant slipped easily from Yoruba to English when helping a very young boy settle in to the

classroom at the start of a new day. He was pleased to say “bye bye Daddy” in English. Soon (his parent gone), he was engaged productively with the bilingual assistant and other children in the Home Corner. Whilst educationally beneficial and greatly valued by colleagues and parents, such bilingual resources are clearly limited, since only the largest language group can be catered for in this way. However, staff members’ general grasp of bilingual learners’ needs ensures these learners are properly included in the full range of learning opportunities - even where a language match with an adult is not possible. Thus, bilingual children learn from watching others and from the many visual clues around them, as well as by listening to adults’ carefully chosen vocabulary. In other words, they learn in the same way as their monolingual peers. Of prime importance is adults’ monitoring of children’s responses to what is happening so as to judge when to step in to check children feel secure. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are an important focus for adults’ attention in daily planning meetings.

22. Adults consistently demonstrate good child-management skills. At all times, they have high expectations of children’s behaviour and attitudes. They make adept judgements about when to intervene and prevent minor disagreements from getting out of proportion. For example, a Nursery Nurse asked two boys to come to her when one became upset and his companion was heard anxiously repeating “I said sorry, I did!” A brief ‘question and answer’ interchange between adult and children established that both knew the incident was accidental. Happily assured, the children moved away amicably together. In co-operative play, adults unobtrusively help children take turns and abide by agreed rules. This was seen when a boy was gently reminded to select only one card from a table when playing a game of picture lotto. He wished to pick up two, but then felt able to put one down.
23. There is a well-established system whereby children choose books from an interesting range to take home each day. Teachers recognise the importance of linking children’s enjoyment of books to developing early reading skills.

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

24. The school has a very good curriculum for all children, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. It is founded in teachers’ secure understanding of the developmental needs of three and four-year-olds and is well matched to meeting these needs. Teachers place prime importance on first-hand experience as a vehicle for successful learning. A key part of curriculum planning is the way shelter teams adjust provision in light of comprehensive assessments made during their daily evaluations of children’s learning.
25. New policies and schemes of work have improved curricula in line with recommendations made in the previous Report. Clearly, considerable hard work and commitment has been invested in addressing this dimension of school life in the light of issues raised previously. Policies and schemes of work have been thoroughly overhauled following a review of the most recent Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance for children in the Foundation Stage.
26. The school has a policy of ‘free-flow’ play, whereby children may choose to work inside their shelter or outside, after the first half-hour of each session. This familiar start to morning and afternoon sessions lets children explore what is currently available in shelters. Teachers adjust planning both to meet individual needs and to arouse children’s curiosity and awareness of new possibilities. Both indoor and outdoor provision is matched to curricular goals across all areas of learning. These goals may be linked to themes of work stretching over a period of a half term. They may be planned as integral to children’s daily experiences in line with their developing needs, or they may be aimed at making sure all areas of learning are properly covered. Therefore, children may opt into a classroom activity, relating to their learning about how babies grow, by engaging in role-play in a baby-clinic. They may investigate how to climb one of the outdoor climbing frames. In their planning, teachers work at meeting known objectives through the key areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. A time is set aside each session for story. Children listen, or join in stories and rhymes. Often, they sit in groups formed according to age-related or developmental needs, or they may gather in their shelters at the end of sessions to join in number songs and rhymes. Thus they learn about number in an active ‘fun’ way.
27. Provision for information and communication technology is very good. Children are able to use computers when they wish. Therefore, both adult-guided and independent learning takes place

throughout the course of each day. All shelters are well equipped with new computers and a range of suitable software (such as paint programs for art and programs linked to number). Children also have good access to taped stories. They use headphones for quiet listening. Imaginative play areas are well equipped with other forms of technology. Children use tills at the 'supermarket' check-out and answer telephones in the baby clinic.

28. Curricular provision is enriched by a range of stimulating activities and learning opportunities in support of planned themes of work. These include visits to places of interest and visitors to school. For example, both locally and nationally-known theatre groups have visited the school. So have storytellers, a dental nurse to promote learning about dental hygiene (through simulations) and a local 'team' who helped develop the school's roof garden. Most recently, the school has received outside help in building a pond with a garden setting. Children go out to the Science and the Natural history museums, the London Aquarium, the nearby Greenwich Observatory and local markets, shops and cafes. Such ventures are built in to curricular planning as a way of extending children's knowledge of their world in ways the children can then exploit in their play.
29. Provision for children learning English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs, including children with Statements of special need, is very good. The school is as an exemplar of well-organised 'inclusive' education, in that the needs of all children are well accounted for in teachers' curricular planning.
30. Class teachers and support staff work closely with the co-ordinator for special educational needs so that all children on the Code of Practice register of special needs have full access to activities alongside their peers. The co-ordinator works effectively with colleagues to clarify children's individual education plans, sharply directing them towards needs identified via assessment procedures. Outside agencies are suitably involved. Parents are consulted and kept well-informed of all matters relating to their children. The co-ordinator regularly monitors children's progress, giving guidance to other staff on the implementation of individual education plans. Her guidance feeds into daily teaching and learning routines. The Code of Practice register is up to date with all relevant information, including that concerning children with medical needs so that all staff members know about these.
31. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good, with a commendably firm focus. Such provision enters teachers' daily planning as a matter of course. Related aims are pursued consistently by all staff. Therefore, even the youngest children understand personal hygiene, washing their hands carefully before tasting samples of baby food, then washing spoons and bowls before scooping samples from different tins.
32. The school has formed very good links with a number of local primary schools where children transfer to the Reception class. The local community makes valued contributions to the life of the school. Older residents talk to children about their early childhood memories in connection with themes of work. Community groups have allied with Nursery staff and parents to improve the Nursery environment (by, for example, building a music garden and developing the school pond).
33. Much thought has been given to raising the spiritual awareness of children and provision for this is good. Gardens surrounding the shelters are important in providing children with opportunities to appreciate the natural world. Children gradually notice the effects their actions have on growing things. When they plant cress seeds, they find out how to tend growing plants, including the importance of watering them regularly. Children celebrate major festivals and learn about the differences and similarities between faiths, making comparisons with their own experiences. They discover the role of the colour red in the Chinese New Year by making celebratory cards. This area of children's learning is part of the rich texture of school life, adding to the way individual uniqueness is celebrated. It reflects the diversity of faiths and cultures within the school's walls as well as in the wider society. Provision for moral development is very good. Shared moral values underpin the aims and ethos of the school. Children are taught to distinguish 'right' from 'wrong'. They know what is expected of them and gradually learn to become responsible for their own actions. For example, a very young girl saw it was not right to snatch something from another. She apologised sincerely enough through adult instigation, then found it hard to follow this through when the adult withdrew! Shelter-rules reflect the school's approach well and are stated in ways the children can grasp in discussion. The rules emphasise the caring and sharing which are seen, daily, in adults' own actions, helping children to keep to the rules and realise broader, moral aims.

34. Provision for children's social development is very good. Children are taught to care for one another and be polite. They develop good social skills. All members of staff are good role models, demonstrating important social and personal qualities in the way they respect each other and in the way they care for equipment and materials. Children mirror such respect and care in their own actions. They display good social skills at lunch times when they eat their meals. They are polite to each other and to visitors. The quality of provision for cultural development is very good. The school builds successfully on children's own diverse experiences. Toys and artefacts reflect the wide range of experiences from the different cultural traditions represented in the Nursery. They add to the practical dimensions of children's learning. Activities such as cooking enrich children's understanding of different foods and ways of preparing these. Good use is made of parents' and others' expertise to extend children's knowledge, especially in the fields of art and music. At story time, children listen to a story being read in Yoruba and in English. They do so, not only so that Yoruba speakers can easily make sense of the story, but also because monolingual English speakers enjoy and benefit from the experience. These latter pupils are fascinated to realise that words which sound quite different can mean the same thing. Teachers make very good use of the written forms of different languages for labelling displays, areas of work and resources. Children are comfortable in their Nursery surroundings and feel valued and respected.

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

35. This aspect of school life has many strengths and is very good overall. The care and welfare of children is uppermost in the minds of all adults. The school is a safe environment for small children; while there are surfaces where a child might trip, no serious hazards are presented and children quickly learn how to take care and be sensible in how they move around. Such recognition and avoidance of hazards is crucial to children's development. The school strikes a good mid-way point between care and over-protection. This aspect of the school's responsibilities was not commented on in the last Report.
36. Child protection procedures are good. Key staff members are properly trained and information is disseminated to staff pertinently. The way shelter teams work closely together ensures knowledge is shared and that new or temporary staff are fully briefed. Of particular note is the way personal hygiene and safe modes of working are integral to each school day. Fire drills are held regularly and the school is well signed to show where equipment is kept.
37. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating children's progress and recording their social and personal development and academic performance across all areas of learning are very good. A Key Worker assigned to each child from day of entry keeps up-to-date records of development (or pupil-profiles) throughout the Nursery schooling experience. Adults in each shelter regularly make detailed notes on each child to meet planned observational objectives. They record 'significant steps' in any individual's learning when s/he has achieved something worthy of note. These recorded observations are of very good quality, revealing not only an in-depth grasp of how young children develop but also a capacity to connect across areas of learning and illuminate the points being made. Key Workers enter observations into each child's profile, together with relevant examples of work, building up a comprehensive picture over time. For example, a small painting may show good progress in holding a brush correctly. A photograph may show a child building a structure with bricks, or concentrating, for the first time, for longer than a few brief minutes. Children's development in all areas of communication, language and literacy and in mathematics is systematically recorded through highlighting 'stepping stone' objectives related to the Early Learning Goals. In total, each profile gives an extremely clear picture of development over time. A valuable part of each profile is the record made by the Key Worker of a discussion with parents or carers at the end of a child's 'settling in' period. Through this record, the school not only registers information about systematic observations and identified needs but also gives insight into a family's perceptions of its child as a developing individual. There is a high level of consistency of practice across the whole school. Such consistency marks a shared commitment to excellence in regard to the quality of recorded information kept.
38. As said, information gathered for monitoring and assessing children's progress lays a very good foundation for determining future needs. It includes information about children learning English as an additional language and those identified as having special educational needs, or who have Statements of special needs. Very good quality provision is made for these children.

39. Procedures for encouraging attendance are good. The headteacher monitors attendance carefully and outside agencies are suitably involved. Absences are followed up promptly where reasons for these are unknown. The school has a very good awareness of the kind of community it serves. It works systematically at keeping parents and carers personally informed about the need for regular attendance and for starting sessions punctually. Very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are applied throughout the school. The school's approaches to the inclusion of all pupils and its emphasis on the value of each individual's contribution to the life of the school community are a strength. They form a secure base for the monitoring and elimination of oppressive behaviour. No bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection.

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

40. The school's links with parents are very good. These links are founded on a strong commitment to involving all parents and carers fully in the education of their children. This involvement is seen as vital to ensuring that children gain confidence in themselves as learners and fulfil their potential during their time in the Nursery.
41. Responses to the parents' questionnaire show a very positive view of the school. Parents have full confidence in the quality of teaching staff and in the school's leadership and management. Respondents also express high levels of satisfaction with their children's progress and enjoyment of school. A small minority is dissatisfied with levels of homework and with the quality of information passed on to parents about their children's progress. This dissatisfaction was echoed at the parents' meeting by a small number, prior to the inspection. Almost all at the meeting, however, agreed with the generally positive findings of the questionnaire. A number spoke eloquently about the many successes of the school. These disagreed extensively with the minority view about homework and information. For example, they knew that children can choose a book to take home every day and think this is appropriate provision for very young children. They also recognised how the school goes out of its way to keep all parents informed of children's progress. Where necessary, and in so far as it is practicable, the school ensures information is translated into a family's home language (or meetings are conducted in the medium of the home language and interpreted into English for teachers). Importantly, parents know that Key Workers, as well as the headteacher and her deputy (who is also the co-ordinator for special educational needs), are readily available to be consulted when parents wish. Staff members are seen as readily approachable, so parents can raise any questions of concern. Inspection findings support these positive views. They show that children have good opportunities to choose books for their 'book bags' each day. Available books are well matched to the needs of the age-range. The school makes every effort to ensure parents are well informed about how their children are getting on. Parents and members of staff are seen talking together at the start and end of sessions in ways revealing of their shared responsibilities and aims.
42. A strong partnership between home and school is established when parents first apply to have their child admitted to the school. Parents and carers are made to feel valued from this point on. As a way of building on its good relationships and as a better-informed start to schooling, the school has instituted a system of home-visits before children enter Nursery. There is a high level of trust between parents and Key Workers in the sharing of the information gathered from this visit and from other sources. Parents are able to see their child's profile at any time and so discover what observations are made by teachers and how future learning needs are to be decided. Parents appreciate making their own contributions to their children's profiles via the discussion held after their child's 'settling in' period, although some confusion is apparent about parents' perceptions of the purpose of the profile. Some parents at the meeting prior to the inspection referred to them as "reports" on children's progress. They didn't see the profiles as the beginning of a developmental record. Parents receive a detailed account of their child's time in school when developmental observations and progress in each area of learning are recorded, prior to transfer to the Reception class. These records maintain the high quality of recording noted in children's profiles.
43. Parents with children identified as having special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, are kept very well informed of their children's progress. They are fully involved in all aspects of reviewing individual education plans and setting new targets when appropriate. They have full access to a child's record of development in line with the school's policy on such matters.
44. As said above, parents have high quality information about the school and its work. They are

presented with a 'starter pack' before their children begin school explaining its aims and ways of working and the nature of the partnership the school wishes to promote with parents and carers. At the meeting prior to the inspection, it was notable how most parents revealed a detailed knowledge about changes to curricula for children in the Foundation Stage. They were familiar with terms relating to the different areas of learning. Notice-boards are used effectively around the Nursery, and those in shelters advertise the themes of work children are involved in. There is a good sized parents' room where parents can meet informally with one another and where helpful information of a general nature is provided.

45. Parents say they are welcomed into school but that most are unable to visit regularly because of other commitments. They like to support their children's reading at home as far as they can and they like to help their children with planned themes of work. They give good support to the school (for example, by attending meetings called to discuss changes to the school's work). They recognise the positive ethos of the school and the way it embraces all members of the community, whatever their backgrounds. Parents are powerful advocates for the school's aims and values.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher and her deputy have complementary skills and areas of expertise within their partnership, which underpin the school's continuing development. The headteacher's clear-sighted educational vision is founded in her in-depth understanding of the needs of Nursery age children. It is also informed by her commitment to ensuring that equality of educational opportunity is realised through the school's daily practices. She successfully shares this vision with staff, governors and parents. She is equally intent on attaining standards of excellence in all areas of the school's work and is ably supported to this end by senior managers and other staff. Governors are fully committed to the aims and values of the school. Within the constraints imposed by the local education authority's overall control, governors work hard on the school's behalf.
47. The senior management team, consisting of the headteacher, deputy head and the co-ordinators for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, has clearly defined roles. Through their regular monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of teaching and learning in each shelter and outdoor area, senior managers have very good knowledge and understanding of the work of the Nursery, with the two subject co-ordinators paying attention to their areas of responsibility. Senior managers also rigorously monitor the compiling of children's profiles to check their quality and ensure that planning is properly informed by a build-up of knowledge of individual learning needs. More generally, co-ordinators do not formally monitor classroom practice in their subjects, with the exception of communication and information technology. Regarding this area, a thorough review of classroom provision has been geared to making sure that new computers and software are utilised to the advantage of all children. Further, the school's approach to working jointly on developing provision for children in line with priorities set out in school improvement planning (for example, in relation to creative development) ensures that all staff members participate fully in reviewing and evaluating practice as a means of moving forward. Co-ordinators attend relevant In-service courses as determined by such planning or through appraisal. The dissemination of course experiences and of information gained from senior managers' monitoring activities, together with the sharing of expertise through the structured daily and weekly meetings, are important to improving all staff members' professional knowledge. The school continues a long tradition of helping to train nursery professionals, through links with a university and local college training nursery teachers and nursery nurses respectively. Teachers, Nursery Nurses and Primary Helpers talk positively about the professional development opportunities open to them beyond school as well as those undertaken within school during training days and as part of daily work. Staff describe the school as a 'learning environment' for adults and for children, whereby individuals' knowledge and understanding are constantly challenged and developed. Such perceptions are evident in practice, enhancing the ethos of the school, which is that of a lively, thriving community.
48. The school improvement plan sets clear priorities, realistically costed within the school's capacity to set financial goals. Planning has successfully addressed all issues raised in the previous inspection, although it is recognised (as already noted) that the role of governors stays restricted because governors do not have overall control of a fully delegated budget. The school improvement plan is a useful tool for further development. It details how targets will be met and strategies for reaching them, in each area identified. These targets are well matched to priorities determined by staff and governors in light of past work. Within its remit, the governing body fulfils its role satisfactorily. It is suitably involved in those areas of decision-making falling within its sphere of influence. Properly minuted meetings, clerked by the local authority, are held regularly. The school consistently applies principles of best value in those areas of expenditure over which it has control. Some governors visit the school regularly and have a good knowledge of its daily working practices. Parent governors, in particular, are familiar with school routines through their daily contact. More generally, governors are gaining understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although their limited involvement in its strategic management necessarily limits their understanding of this area. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and her staff. They are proud of the school's heritage, the way it reflects the life of the local community in its make-up and activities and the part it plays in the local community's own life and activities.
49. The strategic use of resources is satisfactory, given the school's limitations in this regard. There are good systems for daily management and for the financial administration of the small budget now delegated to the school. Recently, a finance committee was formed to oversee the budget's

deployment and its constitution is to be formalised in light of work done. The secretary provides efficient, cheerful support to the headteacher and her staff; she is a welcoming friendly face in the office for children bringing registers or parents with queries.

50. Good use is made of new technology, both in the school's offices and elsewhere. Specific grants are used for their designated purposes. They support children's attainment well. The co-ordinator for special educational needs regularly oversees activities in shelters and works alongside children to monitor their progress and development at first hand. She brings very good expertise to all aspects of the work and manages it efficiently. The importance attached to provision for special educational needs is signalled by the co-ordinator's role as a senior manager in her capacity as deputy head.
51. The training of all staff members working with children is suited to the age-range taught. Additional staff support children with identified needs to good effect. For example, a bilingual assistant and a learning support assistant for special educational needs are well deployed from local authority specialist services. The school's policy and practice for appraisal and performance management are clear. Appraisal is well aimed at meeting the identified needs of staff members through annual, professional development meetings where relevant targets are set. Those new to the school have a mentor and an appropriate programme of professional development is arranged for them.
52. Accommodation is very good overall, although some planned refurbishment has still to take place (these are not in the school's control). This detracts somewhat from otherwise stimulating and appropriate provision. Shelters and outdoor spaces contain interesting possibilities for extending children's learning. The site manager and cleaning staff keep all in good order. Good quality learning resources are plentiful and well matched to the needs of very young children. Refurbished gardens and the new library considerably enhance provision. Shelter teams make excellent use of available space to create attractive and imaginative learning environments, stimulating children's curiosity and nurturing their development. Other helpers, such as kitchen and cleaning staff, lunch time supervisors in shelters and the site manager, make a valued contribution to school life through their hard work and dedication to what the school sets out to achieve.
53. The school has managed very good improvement since the previous inspection. Its aims and values are plain. It serves all its pupils and their families well.

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

No issues for improvement are identified.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

46

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	54	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)

154

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

51

#### Special educational needs

Nursery

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

13

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

87

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%

School data

#### Unauthorised absence

%

School data

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	83
Black – other	21
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	36
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-01
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	£
Total income	29265
Total expenditure	24923
Expenditure per pupil	182
Balance brought forward from previous year	*
Balance carried forward to next year	4342

\* The school did not have a delegated budget prior to the financial year quoted. The amounts shown refer only to the limited budget it controls. Other funding remains under the control of the LEA.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	91

Number of pupils per FTE adult
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7.2
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

154
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Number of questionnaires returned

40
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### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	33	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	30	5	5	13
The teaching is good.	75	23	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	38	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	20	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	38	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	58	38	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	25	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	25	3	0	8

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

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

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

54. Most children are assessed as having poor personal and social skills when they start Nursery. They are found to need help in raising their levels of self-esteem in order to take full advantage of what the Nursery has to offer. Because teachers understand how to promote personal and social development, children make very good progress. At the time of the inspection, older four-year-olds were already well on the way to achieving most of the Early Learning Goals. Indications are that many children are likely to achieve these goals before transferring to a Reception class. Children learning English as an additional language reach standards at least comparable to those reached by monolingual peers. Children with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, frequently do better than might be expected. Teaching is most often good. At times, it is very good. Teachers' planning takes good account of important skills and concepts in this area. Adults consistently encourage children to do things for themselves. They give guidance only when a child has to be helped over a difficulty that might lead to frustration and disappointment. Therefore, even the youngest pencil their names on work and learn the significance of marks 'owned' solely by themselves.
55. From the first day at school, children learn to make their own decisions. They are expected to choose what they will settle to do when entering a shelter at the start of sessions after they have put coats and personal belongings away. On the signal for outdoor play, children get their own coats and become persistent at fastening up buttons and zips for themselves. Older children do this well. Systems of labelling with children's photographs and names help children develop effective independent skills as well as teaching them the importance of the printed word. For example, when children take a milk carton, they place their name-tag back on the relevant photograph on the wall above. When they choose a book for their book bag, they place its library ticket into the correct pouch on a board to show who has taken the book. Sometimes, independent enquiry can take an unexpected turn. For example, a three-year-old was observed ordering her peers' name tags according to colour to make a satisfying pattern of orange, purple, yellow etc. quite oblivious to the fact that the result did not match the photographs in the way intended! Children are very good at remembering hygiene rules. They wash their hands before handling food when cooking and know it is important to wash equipment they have used. They are very good at caring for their personal hygiene.
56. Commonly, children persist with a chosen task for appreciable periods of time. This is true also of children with special educational needs. For example, a boy became intrigued by clicking icons on a computer screen with the mouse and watching the changes this brought about. He was encouraged by the quiet support of an adult. Whether working with adults or engaged in solitary or shared play, children concentrate well on what they do. When a boy and a girl worked together at a self-imposed task, they used large wooden blocks to build a structure for walking along and jumping off. Through use and discussion, they re-arranged the blocks to suit their needs. Children are not afraid to approach adults to ask for help, knowing they will be listened to seriously. When some children complained that they hadn't had a turn on the bikes, the teacher gave them a large sand timer and told them that when the sand had run through it would be time for their turn. They sat in a row on a plank holding the timer very ostentatiously, eventually shouting 'It's finished.' The riders relinquished their bikes and chose another activity. The youngest children can sometimes find it hard to overcome feelings of being left out. In a whole class counting activity, one boy stated it was 'not fair' when someone else was chosen to participate in a counting song. His posture and face spoke volumes about his feelings but he was helped to cope with these by being chosen for the next song. More frequently, children are aware of adults' expectations of their behaviour when they settle in whole-class or small groups. Through story activities, children learn how to listen to others and put forward their own points of view. A very interesting discussion arose when a Nursery Nurse asked children why they thought a boy in a picture was not yet asleep (although it was clearly very late and two girls were fast asleep). The children put themselves in the boy's place, building well on one another's ideas. When someone suggested he was "waiting for sleep", another added that the "moon was keeping him awake".

57. Children feel secure and valued. They are able to talk happily about their own experiences. The diversity of these experiences is seen as a valuable asset to the Nursery environment, providing opportunities for children to learn about different languages, and cultural and faith traditions. This type of learning is seminal in their developing respect for others' points of view through first-hand learning. Bilingual learners are comfortable speaking their home languages within the Nursery setting. They readily talk to parents and carers in their first language at the beginnings and ends of sessions. Some children work at chosen activities with adults who speak their community language, thus pointing in practical ways to the importance of valuing difference. Since speakers of other languages are readily included in activities with a bilingual assistant, their curiosity is in that way fostered. They extend their own language repertoire by practising words which especially catch their attention. Children are interested in learning how a word is said in a number of languages. They learn counting songs and rhymes in languages other than English. Books in many of the home languages represented in the Nursery are available for children to read during the day or to take home to share with their families.

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

58. From the day they enter Nursery, children make good progress in relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. The oldest children are well along the 'stepping stones' for the Early Learning Goals relating to communication, language and literacy. Indications are that a few children will achieve many of the goals before they leave the Nursery whilst the majority is set to achieve them by the end of the Reception year. Teaching is most frequently good. Teachers help children get involved in worthwhile activities and are skilled in 'seizing the moment' as it arises to extend children's thinking. Adults question and probe to discover what children already know in order to push thinking on. For example, when sampling different kinds of baby foods with a Nursery Nurse, children talked about some being 'smooth' whilst others have 'lumps' in them. Explanations for this, skilfully provoked, helped a four-year-old recall a previous day's discussion on how teeth grow and babies can then chew food. Planning takes very good account of children learning English as an additional language and of those on the Code of Practice register of special needs, including children with Statements of special need. These children make good progress. Bilingual learners frequently achieve standards comparable to their monolingual peers. Those with special educational needs generally do better than might be expected, including those with Statements of special need. The teaching of communication, language and literacy promotes the personal and social development of all pupils very well.
59. Children develop very good speaking and listening skills. All but the youngest spontaneously approach adults to share something of interest or question what the adult is doing. They listen to rhymes and stories, soon realising when they can join in to complete a sentence - as when three-year-olds provide the word "bear!" during a teacher's intentional (and dramatic) pause. Children purposefully explore spoken-language role-play, carefully integrated within themes of work; children dress-up and discuss how babies develop, making good use of their visit to a clinic. They increase their knowledge of aquatic life during water play and while engaging with a suitable range of 'small world' toys. The experiential, problem-solving approach to children's learning works well to foster and exercise children's speaking and listening skills, both in shelters and outside.
60. Children learn to handle books sensibly. They soon realise that print carries meaning. Teachers use 'big books' very successfully. During story time, in one shelter, children were enthralled by the way a teacher read a story about a whale stuck in ice. One child was able to read the author's name on the cover. Quite skilfully, the teacher linked the story to an earlier visit to the London aquarium. In another shelter, children listened to a story in Yoruba and then in English. Yoruba speakers listened wide-eyed at hearing their home language and switched easily between this and English when responding to questions. English speakers were thrilled to realise the same story could be told in different ways and maintained very high levels of concentration throughout. The session included all children in a richly rewarding cultural experience. The Library is time-tabled for regular use by each Shelter. It is a treasure trove of resources, being well furnished with books and story props such as puppets and soft toys, calculated to catch children's interest in different ways. In addition to listening to stories, children have good time choosing their own books to share with friends or an accompanying adult.
61. Children's literacy development is well planned through the use of books to stimulate writing activities. Letter sounds and names are taught in contexts children are familiar with and can enjoy. Teachers pitch questions and explanations well to children's different levels of understanding. For example,

when a teacher worked with three very young children on a simple story they had enjoyed, she enunciated the name of the main character with great care each time it came up on a page. Then she turned to helping children decide which animal they would draw. She saw that detailed discussion of the beginning letters of these animals was not a fruitful line to pursue. Nevertheless, all the children wrote their names independently on their completed work, albeit with varying levels of success. Most four-year-olds write their names correctly when labelling their work. They often 'sound out' beginning letters of words, especially when writing their names. Higher-attaining children say the names and sounds of many letters on alphabet displays. They discern all the ones in their own names. Shelters provide an abundance of opportunities for children to write. Writing and drawing tables are a common feature, and each shelter has role-play areas with paper and pens to hand, as in an 'office', a 'shop' or a 'clinic'. Also, children see print all around them in a range of languages, since teachers routinely label work-areas and resources that are used. In a display celebrating the Chinese New Year, a parent had written labels and sentences in Chinese script. Information and communication technology supports children's writing well. They become increasingly skilled at writing their names using computer keyboards.

### **Mathematical development**

62. Most children enter the Nursery with poorly developed mathematical skills. Through their time in school, they make good progress along the 'stepping stones' and most are in line to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. A few will reach these goals (especially those related to number) by the time they leave the Nursery. Children learning English as an additional language make very good progress and frequently attain at least in line with their peers. Those with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, also make very good progress and often do better than might be expected through the good quality support they receive. Teaching is most frequently good. Teachers plan consistently to build on prior experience. They make sure mathematical concepts and related vocabulary are built in to activities across all areas of learning as well as being taught within a mathematical context. Consistently good quality provision lets children develop mathematical concepts in meaningful situations. Adults interact purposefully with children to teach vocabulary, leading towards planned goals. Teachers use assessment opportunities to plan succeeding steps in mathematics development sequentially.
63. Three-year-olds enter the nursery knowing something about counting. Most count to three by rote, pointing to correct numbers of objects as they count. They soon learn to sing number rhymes such as 'Five Little Monkeys' and 'Number Five'. They join in the actions and watch attentively as other children act out the rhymes. When the rhyme demands that one is taken away from a changing total, the youngest are unsure of what is left until they get to three. Then they know the answer. Older children count to five and always know how many are left. Some three-year-olds recognise the written symbols, especially 'one'. Through games, they learn to identify symbols to five and to hang them in the right order on a 'washing line'. Four-year-olds pick out written numbers to five and most of them recognise them to ten. Higher attainers are challenged by activities such as throwing a dice and putting the right number of objects into a bowl. Adults ask challenging questions such as "You've got 1, 2, 3, 4, how many more to make 9?" Children are sure of their knowledge. One girl said, "I know there's 8 – look at that number", pointing to the right symbol. Higher attaining four-year-olds count beyond ten. Some reach 100 with confidence and a few children can count accurately in 10s. One girl was able to explain the difference between 16 and 61 very clearly. Twice a day, in each shelter, a short mathematics 'focus' is organised for all the children. During that period, adults concentrate on counting activities, letting children explain their individual concepts of number. In one activity, where groups of children stood at the front, the oldest knew which group contained most children, recognising that the group with most children would also be the biggest, numerically.
64. Opportunities to develop mathematical understanding through a range of experiences occur throughout each day. In one shelter, children learned about size by sorting through boxes to find one to fit a soft toy they had chosen. They checked that the paper was big enough to wrap the box. The teacher asked each child "Is it big enough?" expecting the child to check before answering. A group acted out a well-known story so as to illustrate concepts of 'too big' and 'too tall'. Children making pancakes counted the spoons of flour and water as these went into the mixing bowl. As children weigh, they are taught the words 'heavy' and 'light'. They check weighing scales to see the level of the pans, making comparisons of weight and size. They learn the names of two and three-dimensional shapes through playing with construction toys, wooden blocks and geometric carpet shapes. This knowledge is

transferred into other kinds of play. When rolling out play dough, one child arranged three rolling pins as a triangle. She said, 'Look, I've made a triangle'. A boy was observed rolling play dough and holding it up, commenting "it's longer, longer, longer" as it dropped under its own weight. He checked several times to see if this would always happen. At the creative table, one girl explained to another, "This is how you make a Christmas tree. You get a triangle and then another and another and another and you stick them all together." She matched her actions to her words.

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

65. On entry to the nursery, most children's knowledge and understanding of the world outside of their own environment is limited. All children make very good progress through the stimulating range of activities provided, including the many opportunities to explore the world beyond the school. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers build successfully on the rich diversity of languages, cultures and faiths children bring in to school so that planning is firmly rooted in experiences that are meaningful to children. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of this area of development. They are concerned that children's lively and enquiring minds benefit from an investigative approach. Teaching is lively and positively affects learning so that by the time they leave the nursery, children have a good knowledge and understanding of their world. Bilingual learners frequently attain in line with their monolingual peers. Children with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, achieve standards better than might be expected. At the time of the inspection, most older four-year-olds were judged to be well along the route towards achieving relevant Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the Reception year. Some will achieve these goals before they transfer to their Reception class.
66. Children have a wide range of items of construction equipment and building materials. They discover how things work. They construct large shapes with wooden building blocks, both in and out of doors. In the gardens, they explore the natural world and talk about their findings. Children go on study visits to the local environmental centre and to places such as the London aquarium where they learn about ocean creatures. These experiences overlap with classroom activities such as water play, helping children further investigate how ocean creatures move and live. They make pictures and mobiles on this theme, using reference books to confirm what creatures look like. They make paper bags with paper printed previously. Applying different joining materials (such as sticky tape and glue), they stick their bag's sides together, attaching handles and testing to see if these are strong enough. Elsewhere, children make milk for babies' bottles, having heard a mum talking about this. They try mixing powder with water until satisfied the milk is the correct consistency. They pour milk carefully into a bottle, measuring how much they have poured. Children work well together, helping each other with their tasks. In an activity exploring the senses, children taste lemons to make a lemon jelly and, as part of this activity, notice how steam rises from a boiling kettle. In evaluating previous work, a teacher had commented that the children talked about "smoke" coming out of the kettle when they made tea, although this term was not used by an adult. The opportunity was seized and correct vocabulary was reinforced in the jelly-making work.
67. In all shelters, children use computers knowledgeably to develop a range of relevant skills. Even very young children use a mouse as an adjunct to their learning in different curricular areas. For example, they use it to help with handwriting on the computer screen and to share ideas when working with pictures and sound. Children cook food and learn about different tastes and textures. They enjoy their work, investigating and exploring the world around them with assurance and a sense of fun. On visits out of school they learn about the wider world, bringing novel ideas back into the classroom as stimuli for later enquiry.

### **Creative development**

68. Children make good progress in their creative development. Bilingual learners and children with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, also make at least good progress. Older four-year-olds are judged to be well in line to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Considering the Reception year is still some time away, it is judged likely many children will achieve important goals before then, with some reaching the relevant 'stepping stones' before they leave the Nursery. Teaching is most frequently good and it is very good at times. Teachers plan effectively to involve children in activities that interest them, feeding their imaginative powers very well. They make very good use of available resources, which are varied and changed

regularly to maintain children's interest. Planning links well across areas of learning. Provision for creative development promotes children's personal, social and emotional development to very good effect.

69. There is a good range of media for two and three-dimensional work available. Children paint self-portraits with thick, water-based paint. They make close observational studies of things they investigate (such as fruit and vegetables) using paint, crayons, felt-tip pens and pencils. They create collages with paper, card and materials such as pasta to achieve different textures. They make imaginative representations of their own ideas such as "my garden", building mobiles and other three-dimensional structures connected to themes of work (such as 'ocean creatures'). They experiment with printing mathematical shapes to create their own pattern-sequences and explore the effects gained from blowing coloured bubbles on to paper. Whilst adults may initiate or support activities at times, children frequently take charge of their own work; they mix paints, choose the colour of the paper they want to use and decide when they have finished. Varying levels of skill are evident. The youngest three-year-olds concentrate on exploring media to see what happens when colours are mixed, while the oldest four-year-olds work more deliberately to achieve desired results. Children draw pictures illustrating stories they are composing linked to their literacy studies in very personal and lively ways.
70. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes and have a wide repertoire built from many cultural traditions. They experiment with sounds on the instruments set out. Although the youngest do not share one another's efforts and prefer to bang the drums hard, side-by-side, they respond well to an adult's skilled intervention. Subsequently, they work at producing different effects with beaters, altering dynamics from 'very, very quiet' to 'very loud' with help. One child investigates how to make a pattern up the scale on a glockenspiel, then repeat it.
71. Children thoroughly enjoy the many possibilities for role-play. Older children are adept at organising these and work very co-operatively with each other. They include younger children in their play, teaching them how to act in a situation (as when some young pupils were instructed about a proper way of shopping in a 'supermarket' set up). These older children move in and out of their roles to discuss what should happen next or how something should be done. This was seen in a 'hairdressing salon' where four girls debated at length how to proceed, sharing equipment during the course of their discussion. Younger children play alongside one another or willingly select an activity by themselves. One girl showed good understanding of how to change the 'baby' in the baby clinic, placing the doll on a changing mat and folding a nappy correctly. Children enjoy re-telling stories and imagining 'what might happen if...'. One girl was watched, telling a story from a familiar book to an imaginary audience. She modelled adults' behaviour very well, holding the book for the 'audience' to see and answering questions appropriately. Children have good access to a very wide range of 'small world' toys and construction kits for imaginative play. Again, it is the older children who have a well-developed capacity to share play activities and devise stories to fit the toys they use. Younger children play in parallel, alongside their peers. For example, they might imitate the noise of cars, grouping model houses and people to suit their own imagined settings. One girl was seen to wait until a boy had moved away from a table before going round to pick up a car she had clearly been coveting for some time. Frequently, children show such awareness of others in their play.

### **Physical development**

72. Many children live in flats or in houses with small gardens. They cannot play safely out of doors. Most enter Nursery with under-developed physical skills. Through their time in school they make good progress along the 'stepping stones' and are set to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Some will reach most of these goals by the time they leave the Nursery. Children learning English as an additional language attain on a par with their monolingual peers in this area of development. The very good quality provision ensures children with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need, achieve better than might be expected in this area of learning. Teaching is most frequently of good quality. Teachers plan well for the development of necessary skills. For example, children learn to manipulate tools with their fingers adeptly and soon climb without anxiety. Teachers make very good judgements about when to give advice and practical support and when to hold back, letting children practise for themselves.
73. The school's large gardens with a variety of surfaces such as grass, bark, sand and tarmac and a



wide range of toys and activities both indoors and outside constitute excellent provision. Children's physical abilities are catered for across all aspects of the curriculum. Each day, the gardens are set out with wheeled toys and small apparatus such as bats, balls and beanbags to complement fixed climbing frames. Drawing and writing materials, jigsaw puzzles and musical instruments are set out on tables under verandas so that children can develop and exercise their fine motor skills outside the classroom. Children can use these areas throughout most of each day. During the inspection, children moved freely from classroom to garden and stayed outside under the veranda playing instruments while the rain poured down.

74. Daily opportunities for physical outdoor play involve cycling, balancing, pushing and pulling toys such as trucks and trolleys. When cycling, children follow paths and avoid colliding with other vehicles. Most cycle well using two pedals. Younger children alternately scoot, then cycle for one or two rotations. They enjoy these activities and readily take turns and share toys. Three-year-olds hold tightly to rails on climbing frames as they climb upwards and some are fearful at climbing down. With practice and adult encouragement, they lose their fears and climb higher. They learn to step over a top rung with ease and descend quickly. Adults show them how to hit a ball with a bat, throw quoits on to a cone and beanbags into a bucket. The children try hard to do what adults show them. They enjoy learning a new skill and are proud of their successes.
75. When children start in the nursery, many hold pencils in their fists and draw round and round. They are encouraged to hold pencils properly and, by the time they leave, they have good control and can write recognisable letters and numbers. They hold paintbrushes tightly to dip them into water before twirling the brushes in paint and transferring the paint to paper. Most do this without making a mess. When they need to change painting-water, children carefully carry a pot to a sink, empty and refill it before carrying it back to a table without spilling any water. Adults encourage the children to be independent by advising them about how to carry things. At first, children use scissors with little success, but, when shown, they try to keep the blades vertical and make long cuts. They are very pleased at their own skill and use it to fringe around the edge of lots of pieces of paper, delighting in the result. Their play with construction toys helps with the fine motor skills they need to put together tiny pieces of a kit. Such freely available activities enable children to make good progress in physical skills.
76. Children set their own challenges for their developing physical skills. For example, a boy and a girl built a structure on different levels with large wooden blocks. They then practised jumping across the structure from higher to lower levels. The girl went on to modify the activity by continuing her jumps until she ended up back on the ground. The children enjoyed creating a rhythm of sounds as they moved and jumped.