

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRANDPONT NURSERY SCHOOL**

Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 122969

Headteacher: Elaine M Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs Lorna Brackstone  
21872

Dates of inspection: 29 – 31 January 2001

Inspection number: 196790

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitehouse Road
Postcode:	Oxford OX1 4QH
Telephone number:	01865 242900
Fax number:	01865 794350
E-mail address:	headteacher@grandpont-nurs.oxon.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	Oxfordshire
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Su Fischer
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21872	Lorna Brackstone	Registered inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literature Physical development Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? How high are standards? a) the school's results and pupils' achievements
9880	Tony Comer	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
23832	Valerie Whittington	Team inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Creative development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle  
35 Trewartha Park  
Weston-Super-Mare  
North Somerset  
BS23 2RT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>22</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Grandpont Nursery School is situated near the centre of Oxford. It was a new purpose-built nursery in 1995 with spacious accommodation, a community room and large garden. Children are admitted at three years and six months and stay for five terms. The nursery has 50 places, with children initially attending on a part-time basis for three terms and then full-time for their final two terms. Transfer to a first school is made in the term after they are five. In total there are 69 children on roll; 39 are part-time and 30 full-time. Children come from a wide catchment area that includes both owner-occupied and rented housing and represents a mixture of cultures and races. The heritage language of most children is English. Fifty four children are of white United Kingdom or European heritage; the remainder are Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian. Attainment on entry is very varied but is broadly average overall. The school has six children on the special educational needs register, one of whom has a Statement of Special Educational Need.

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

This is an excellent nursery school. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and the teaching is consistently of very good quality. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress. The children start with standards that are broadly average but by the time they leave the nursery, they are attaining levels well above those expected for their age. Income per child is high but, nevertheless, the nursery still provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards in all areas of learning are well above average.
- The teaching is of a consistently very good standard and is frequently excellent.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has a very clear educational direction. Exceptional teamwork and a governing body of the highest quality ably support her.
- The children have exceptional attitudes to the nursery and their behaviour is excellent.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is excellent and those with statements receive impressive support.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is excellent.
- The community plays an exceptional role in the children's learning and relationships with partner institutions are excellent.
- Links with parents are outstanding and they hold the nursery in the highest regard.
- The accommodation and level of resources are excellent; both are used to the maximum benefit for all children.

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

- This nursery has no weaknesses.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was first inspected in November 1996. The report identified four key issues for action and all of the weaknesses pointed out have been fully addressed and completed. Careful emphasis has been given to ensuring that mathematics has a higher emphasis within the curriculum to challenge the older and higher-achieving children. Very detailed weekly planning is now produced and this clearly reflects the rigorous team planning that

takes place with both the teachers and the nursery nurses. More regular opportunities are provided for the children to talk about and review their own work. This takes place particularly in the group sessions. Arrangements for registration have been successfully reorganised to increase the time available for teaching.

These improvements have been tackled both systematically and enthusiastically by the headteacher and her staff and are ongoing. Very good progress has been made to address all the issues, resulting in a substantial improvement in classroom practice and children's standards of attainment. The level of improvement is very good and high performance has been achieved. The nursery's capacity for improvement is very good, with a continuing strong commitment to high standards of attainment and further enhancement of the quality educational provision for the children.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the national Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:		Key
language and literacy	A	well above average A
Mathematics	A	above average B
personal and social development	A	average C
other areas of the curriculum	A	below average D
		well below average E

Children start nursery at the age of three with very varied levels of attainment, which is, however, judged to be average overall. Standards of attainment in all areas of learning are well beyond those expected of children as they transfer to reception or Year 1 at the first school and this is very good. Children make very good progress across all areas of learning. Older children have regular chances to practise their listening, reading, writing and number skills in well-planned adult-directed activities. Children with identified special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, also make consistently very good progress and take a full and successful part in the work planned for them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. The children are so enthusiastic about their activities and love coming to the nursery. Their level of interest is of the highest quality and their involvement is excellent.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Behaviour is exceptional both indoors and outside in the garden area and there is no evidence of any aggressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The children initiate activities and frequently take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in the garden area. Relationships within the nursery are outstanding.
Attendance	Good. Children regularly come to school and arrive on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Very good

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

Overall the quality of teaching is judged to be consistently very good in all areas of learning and frequently it is of very good quality. During the inspection 22 sessions or part sessions were observed. Teaching was never less than satisfactory and 32 per cent of lessons were judged to be good, 36 per cent were very good and 27 per cent were of excellent quality. Particular strengths of the teaching are the outstanding management of the children, the highest quality of knowledge and understanding of both the nursery nurses and the teachers and the excellent expectations of both behaviour and performance of the children. Basic skills are competently taught and a wide variety of different teaching methods are used very well. These include both individual and group-time sessions. The very best use is made of time and teaching sessions are brisk in pace, with excellent deployment of resources. The quality of day-to-day assessment is also very good and used well to monitor the children's progress. Books are taken home and shared with both parents and carers and this has a positive impact on the children's learning. The quality of teaching and learning for special educational needs and for children for whom English is an additional language is also very good. All staff play a significant role in helping to raise standards and very careful efforts are made to ensure that the work planned for children is well matched to their individual needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is very broad and balanced and meets the needs of all children. Provision for personal, social and health education is excellent, as is the contribution made by the community to children's learning and relationships with partner institutions.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. The needs of all children with special educational needs are met. Their individual needs are very carefully identified and they are supported to a very high degree by specific interactions and high-quality observations.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The specialist support teacher plans very closely with the other staff. She interacts very well with the children and skilfully uses her linguistic experience to help the children with their learning of English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent and they are given exceptional opportunities to establish good relationships and learn to work within a community. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good.
How well the school	Excellent. The care for the children is of the highest standard



cares for its pupils	and all staff know their needs very well.
----------------------	---

Links with parents and carers are excellent and they hold the nursery in highest regard. The quality of information received is excellent and the contribution of parents to children's learning is outstanding.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides clear educational direction, which is of the highest quality. The aims of the nursery are clearly reflected in its day-to-day work. She shares a strong team spirit with her staff and all are committed to achieving the very best for the children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors make frequent visits to the nursery and responsibilities are fully met. The governing body has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery and share fully in shaping its direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The nursery team are committed to improvement. Appropriate targets are thoroughly identified and progress regularly reviewed to ensure that the children receive the best possible education.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Staff deployment is of the very highest quality and the excellent learning resources are used to the best effect. The accommodation is excellent and both the indoor and outdoor areas are used to the utmost. In consultation with the local education authority, the nursery very effectively applies the 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>• Their children like nursery.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the nursery is good.</li> <li>• They feel that their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with any queries or concerns.</li> <li>• Staff work very closely with them and they feel well informed about the progress their children are making.</li> <li>• They consider teaching to be of good quality.</li> <li>• They felt that the nursery is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	

Inspectors' judgements support the very positive views expressed by the parents both in the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting held prior to the inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. After five terms at the nursery at the age of five, the vast majority of children are achieving standards well beyond the expected levels in all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage.
2. By the time the children have finished their fifth term at nursery and they are five, standards in personal and social development are well above those expected and this is very good. Social skills are of a particularly high standard and children interact very well together. They play together very well when constructing bridges with wooden bricks or tall towers with plastic blocks. Both boys and girls sensibly take turns on the outdoor climbing equipment and co-operate when using both scooters and bicycles. They share resources when they work together in their 'station ticket office' and happily play alongside each other in the 'Chinese restaurant' or 'home corner'. In these situations, the older children show a developing ability to interact with their friends and embark on joint enterprises such as discussing and organising who will be the 'customer' and who will be the 'waiting staff' in the restaurant. At story time and in group sessions, they both listen and co-operate very well with adults. When sharing things, they respect the rights of other children and this is evident in the book area and at the computers. Standards in personal development are very high. Most children take an active part in the school's routines and willingly accept the associated responsibilities and tasks. They readily make a start on activities when they arrive at nursery and know to use wellington boots and coats outside when it is necessary. At the lunch table they confidently ask for appropriately-sized portions and their conversation during this time is commendably mature for children of this age.
3. The standards in communications, language and literacy, at age five, are well above those expected for children of after this age and this is very good. Standards in listening skills are particularly good and children listen very carefully to both adults and other children when working in groups. They show a very good understanding of language in these situations. Their vocabulary is very good in its range of words, phrases and technical terms. Many use appropriate descriptive language as they play and explore and older children are given specific opportunities to develop their confidence by explaining their work and ideas to others in a group. For example, older children are given opportunities to review and discuss the activities that they have been involved in during their self-sustaining sessions. They are also encouraged to recap on the focus during previous group times. The children develop very good reading skills. The youngest children have a good understanding of how books are organised and are able to turn pages in the correct order and follow the print or pictures. They enjoy sitting alone, in pairs, or with an adult at times, sharing stories and reading some of the words. They know that some books provide factual information for them. Children's writing skills are very good and many of the older children communicate their ideas well in writing. The youngest children sometimes choose to make marks and draw pictures. Older children successfully write their names, copy words and letters well and also make signs for their role-play area. These are all usually made without adult help. Many are able to compose their own stories on the computer and then read them back to an adult.
4. By the end of their fifth term in nursery, when they are five, children's standards in mathematics are well above expected levels and this is very good. The oldest

children can count confidently and accurately well beyond ten, match objects one to one, arrange items in sequences, make patterns, and resolve simple problems in practical situations. They successfully use numbers in many areas of the curriculum and develop an appropriate mathematical vocabulary through rhymes, games, stories and songs. The majority of older children can write the correct number symbol unaided and can do simple addition and subtraction sums orally. They match numbers and shapes confidently when practising skills on a computer. Many mathematical concepts such as 'amount' and 'ordered sequence' are learnt and naturally applied by children as they use sand, dough, construction blocks, puzzles and games.

5. The children's standards in their understanding and knowledge of the world by their fifth term in nursery, at the age of five, are well above the expected level and this is very good. Using their woodland area for direct observations, they develop a good understanding of the different seasons and know that some leaves change colour from green to brown. They have a good understanding of living things and grow a range of plants from seeds or bulbs. The children develop very well their powers of observation and understand that water is required to make them grow. Children know about different building properties of wet and dry sand and know that ingredients change when they are mixed and then baked into cakes. They also have a direct knowledge of the forces used to push and pull prams and wheelbarrows. Children learn about their families. They know that, as they grow older, things change over time and they talk appropriately about past events in the nursery. They chat about the immediate area around the nursery and about where they live. They build tracks and include geographical features in their play with models. Children make good models using reclaimed materials and use hand drills and hammers safely. They build elaborate constructions from wooden blocks. They can use other appropriate methods of joining such as sticky tape and glue. Children have very good computer skills. Almost all children, including the youngest, use a mouse competently to match and count objects on the screen. They competently use a listening station to hear stories. In their play they show how to use telephones and how other home-based electronic equipment are controlled.
6. By the end of the fifth term in nursery, when children are five, standards in the creative area of learning are well above expected levels and this is very good. Children express their ideas and feelings with growing confidence and skill through drawing, painting, imaginative play and music. They apply paint in various ways and successfully mix their colours to produce patterns and pictures, which they are pleased to share with others. Children readily initiate role play in a wide variety of situations and this both helps to develop their imagination and adds a great deal to their all-round development. Children enthusiastically sing songs and nursery rhymes, and listen and respond well to different types of music. They explore sounds and rhythms and demonstrate very good listening skills. They are able to follow a tune, sing well and join in with appropriate actions.
7. Standards in physical development by the end of the fifth term in nursery, when the children are five, are well above expected levels and this is very good. They move around the nursery confidently and have easy access to the outside for the development of a wide range of movement and co-ordination skills. They use all the space well with careful attention to their own and other children's safety. The children quickly learn to use the outdoor play equipment to extend their physical skills and powers of co-ordination and control, running, jumping, climbing and sliding with increasing skill and confidence. Indoors they handle construction kits, tools and

pencils well and manipulate materials such as clay with increasing precision and fine hand and finger control.

8. All children, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress consistently across all areas of learning. Effective and timely adult intervention during all the learning activities helps to develop children's understanding of new concepts and the skills they need to use in their work; for example, in mathematics, science, and creative work. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be good in language and literacy, and in design and technology, but average in all other areas of learning. Current inspection findings indicate that the combination of the high quality of teaching, and the high quality of planning and provision has resulted in the very good progress being made by all the children.

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

9. The children's attitudes to school are excellent. They enjoy coming to school, show a keen interest in lessons, are able to work independently and enter into discussions confidently. This is considered to be an improvement since the last inspection, when attitudes were considered to be very good.
10. At the time of the last inspection, children's behaviour was considered good overall. It is now judged to be excellent with no evidence of oppressive behaviour. Children respect each other's feelings and play happily together in the playground. They move around the school in a sensible and polite manner.
11. Relationships between children, and between children and adults, are also excellent and this exceptional standard has been maintained since the last inspection. Most children are willing and confident to talk to adults about school and their work. There is a very good range of educational visits that contribute to children's personal development. Access to an adjacent woodland area and the planned group times also provide very good opportunities for personal development.
12. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the children make a significant contribution to effective learning. Parents believe that the children like school, that they make good progress, that their behaviour is good and that the school helps them to become mature and responsible.
13. Children's attendance is good; they arrive punctually and lessons start on time.

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

14. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is judged to be consistently very good in all areas of learning and frequently it is of very good quality. During the inspection 22 sessions or part sessions were observed. Teaching was never less than satisfactory and 32 per cent of lessons were judged to be good, 36 per cent very good and 27 per cent of excellent quality. During the inspection, every member of staff taught at least one activity which was of a very good standard and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
15. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the educational needs of this age group and have the very highest expectations of the children. They plan very carefully and activities are very well structured and prepared. Instructions are

communicated effectively to all others adults working in the areas of learning and learning points are carefully highlighted, thus enabling the children to understand the specific focus. The levels of adult intervention are very good. They take opportunities to reinforce main teaching points and consolidate and extend learning thoroughly. This occurred in a group-time session when the very youngest children, who had only been in the nursery for a few days, were asked to count the number of plastic beakers available and then to check to see if everyone in the group would be able to have a drink. The nursery nurse involved listened carefully to the children's comments and, where necessary, prompted them with their suggestions.

16. The quality of teaching and learning for special educational needs and for children for whom English is an additional language is very good. All staff play a significant role in helping to raise standards and very careful efforts are made to ensure that the work planned for children is well matched to their individual needs. Individual education plans are carefully matched to the children's needs. Progress against these is reviewed regularly and shared with parents. All staff work together with children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language to help them achieve the targets in the individual plans. Staff have very high expectations and excellent relationships encourage the children to succeed. For some children on the early stages of the school's special educational needs register, staff prepare and work carefully to action plans to ensure progress where needs are identified. Special educational needs assistants give very high-quality support and make a very positive contribution to the good progress children are making. The specialist teacher for children for whom English is an additional language manages the area very well and enjoys close contacts with parents, health visitors, speech therapists and other health agencies. A range of very good strategies is used to ensure that the children are able to participate fully in all activities. The work of these children is regularly assessed and the information gained is targeted to support their learning needs.
17. Teachers have the highest expectations of children's behaviour, which is handled in a caring and sensitive manner. As a result, children want to take an active part in their work and are being helped to become independent learners. All members of staff establish a calm and happy environment within the group activities and have excellent relationships with the children. All staff show an awareness of the importance of ensuring that children have equal access to the curriculum. Resources are carefully provided to meet the needs of all children. For example, they provide sensitive support for the younger part-time children as well as extending the learning opportunities for the older full timers. All staff have a relaxed and pleasant manner, using praise and encouragement to develop the children's confidence and self-esteem. This has a beneficial effect on the quality of learning and on the standards achieved by the children.
18. The use of time and resources allocated to the areas of learning is excellent. Staff employ a wide range of strategies so that there is a very good balance of group and individual work. They ensure that there are regular times when children work with adults on structured activities to enable them to acquire new skills and knowledge on a regular and systematic basis. An example of this is when supportive arrangements are made to give children regular chances to practise number activities.
19. The quality and use of teachers' day-to-day assessment are very good. All staff share the enjoyment of children's successes, showing delight at each child's achievements. They use on-going assessment as part of their normal daily work and knowledge gained from these observations of selected children in terms of their

individual attainment and response. As a result of these close observations, targets for individual children are set and used to inform the next steps of planning.

20. Without doubt the quality of teaching in this school has a very good impact on the children's learning. The staff create an environment that encourages children to learn, show curiosity and involve themselves in their work. The children are learning to show pride in what they do. Both the headteacher and all her staff are dedicated to providing the best for the children and those parents who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires and met the team echo this significant strength. Staff actively aim to involve parents in their children's education and this is encouraged in many ways. For example, children take books home to share with their families and this promotes their learning very well.

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

21. The school meets all statutory requirements for children in the Foundation Stage. Very good use is made of resources within the community and a wide variety of different activities enrich the children's learning. Following the previous inspection, there were key issues associated with the curriculum. All have been addressed fully and the standards now seen within the nursery indicate that a very high level of improvement has taken place since then.
22. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities offered to the children are very good. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum include many strengths. For example, useful links are made between different areas of learning and all activities are based on first-hand experience. These combine to provide a rich and stimulating environment within which the children make very good progress with their learning. Children have good equality of access to the curriculum. Planned activities take good account of the needs of young children to learn by exploring and experimenting with a wide range of different materials and equipment. The school has appropriate strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Provision for children's personal, social and health education is excellent. The school ensures that every child feels valued, secure and respected.
23. Children with special educational needs receive excellent support and make very good progress. This is a result of well-structured teaching and the high-quality support that these children receive. Needs are identified early and all staff are aware of the procedures. Detailed individual education plans are drawn up; they are reviewed regularly and parents are fully involved. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the Code of Practice. Those with the potential for high attainment are identified and given suitable work. The curriculum is also adapted very well to meet the needs of children who use English as an additional language.
24. The community makes an excellent contribution to children's learning. For example, frequent use of the adjoining wood and regular visits are planned to provide highly meaningful experiences for the children to link with themes such as the outings to Didcot Station or Oxford Museum. The school also has links with schools in Europe in which staff seek to improve the provision in the nursery. Good involvement exists from a wide range of agencies such as the health visitor. Other visitors to the school include artists for weaving or group painting and experts for specific projects such as creating a water-way. For instance, a reptile specialist allowed children to meet a snake at close quarters and members of a local music group use the community

room regularly, with several playing their musical instruments for the children. Links with the schools to which the children transfer are excellent.

25. Provision for the children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good and provision for their social development is excellent.
26. Provision for children's spiritual development is very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The nursery environment is a place where awe and wonder are natural features, often unplanned, arising from activities themselves. During the inspection, children played a violin and were mesmerised by the sound, showing expressions of wonder; two achieved a few notes on a saxophone, to their great delight. The youngest children marvelled when they matched soft toy characters to a story about 'Spot'. There are a great many fascinating 'hands on' resources.
27. Provision for children's moral development is very good and this has improved since the last inspection. The school teaches the principles that separate right from wrong and children are aware of what is acceptable behaviour, fostering positive values such as honesty and fairness. This is developed well during whole-class and group time. For example, during a discussion following a story, the children were asked to empathise with the character in the story that had been rude to the bears 'How do you think she felt?' The majority of these older children realised she would feel embarrassed.
28. Children's social development is excellent and has improved since the last inspection. They are encouraged to relate effectively to others. Most work happily in pairs and small groups, whether co-operating on a computer, playing a game together or building outdoor structures to play on or with. They listen well to each other, respecting what they have to say. Many help and support each other and most appreciate their efforts. Children treat all resources with great care and respect.
29. Provision for children's cultural development is very good and this too has improved since the last inspection. The school recognises the importance of children valuing their own culture. Parents are asked to share their own cultures in many different ways, not just celebrating the annual festivals, but by reading different stories in their own languages, or different types of cooking, music and clothes. In this way the child's self-esteem grows. For instance, dolls from around the world, labelled with their individual greetings, welcome visitors at the nursery's entrance. Posters and photographs, books and other resources, value and reflect different cultures and beliefs. For example, there is a wide range of musical instruments from other cultures and the Chinese restaurant includes suitable clothes for dressing up. As well as recent activities to learn about and enjoy Chinese New Year, the school celebrated its own heritage by involving the community in its 'fiftieth' birthday party last summer.

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

30. The support and guidance which children receive, both formal and informal, are very good and parents appreciate the openness and approachability of staff in dealing with questions and problems. The teaching and support staff know the children well and respond to their needs. Overall, the care that children receive remains a strength of the school since the previous inspection and has had a beneficial effect on their progress and personal development.
31. Procedures for monitoring and supporting children's academic progress are very good. A key issue following the previous inspection was to ensure that regular

opportunities were provided for children to talk about and review their own work. This has been addressed and it is now a part of everyday practice.

32. A balance of both formal and informal methods ensures that all staff know the children very well. The use of this assessment to guide curricular planning is very good. All children are recognised as having individual needs and all are offered suitably challenging tasks. Staff are fully aware of those with special educational needs, including those with the potential for high attainment; tasks for these children are structured well and this too has a positive impact on learning. The school's own assessments are carried out during the first term of entry and reviewed regularly, involving parents as part of this well-thought-out and continuous process. Information from all stages of assessment is used to set suitable challenge for individual children throughout the year. One very good system at the school is 'special time'. This is set aside for staff to allow observation of individual children throughout a session and ensure that staff know the children as well as they can and that they respond to their individual needs. This is at an early stage of development to support appropriate target setting for individual children.
33. Record books are kept for all children and are updated termly. The quality of the school's assessment systems contributes significantly to the recognition of children's individual and cultural differences. Staff know the children and their needs well. Evaluation of the records is developing appropriately and shows areas of learning covered and achieved by the end of the children's time in the nursery. Staff are beginning to use this information to check for gaps in learning and use this information to modify plans for teaching. Excellent communication with parents ensures that a rounded picture of the child is created between home and school. Records are very comprehensive, from home to school through to the final term. They provide a very good discussion between home and school and give a full picture of the child's development.
34. Procedures for monitoring, recording and reporting children's personal development are very good. Children with special educational needs receive excellent support. The individual records of children's progress and development, and the regular discussions with parents, are features of this very good practice.
35. The school policies and procedures successfully promote discipline, good behaviour and health and safety. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent and meet all requirements. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are good. The registration periods are used effectively as a means of starting lessons calmly and as an opportunity to communicate with parents.

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

36. Overall, the school's partnership with parents is excellent and parents believe that the school works closely with them. The quality of this exceptional partnership has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents agree that they are well informed about children's progress and are happy with what the school provides and achieves. Parents' contribution to, and involvement with, their children's learning at school and at home are excellent.
37. There is very effective communication between the school and parents, with information provided through regular newsletters, parents' meetings and annual reports. The range of information about all aspects of school life, planning and organisation that is displayed in the reception area is exemplary. The children's



individual records give parents a clear indication of what pupils' know, understand and can do, as well as indicating strategies for improvement.

38. The school makes successful efforts to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school and the Grandpont Nursery School Association (GNSA) is committed to enhancing the social and financial aspects of the school.

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

39. The excellent leadership and educational direction given by the headteacher are instrumental to the school's positive ethos and rich learning climate. Her role as headteacher has strengthened significantly since the last inspection. She has engendered a strong team spirit with her staff and a shared commitment to achieving the very best for the pupils. The headteacher has outstanding determination and a commitment to providing the best for the children. She leads by example and, as a teaching headteacher, has first-hand knowledge of the children's needs and progress. This approach fully reflects the aims of the nursery, which focuses on play as 'foundation for a life-time's learning'. The nursery endeavours to provide an atmosphere where every member of the school community feels 'valued, enabled and enriched'. This aim is very successfully met. The day-to-day management is very good and is well supported by a part-time secretary who effectively, in limited time, assists the headteacher in the smooth running of the school.
40. The governing body makes frequent visits to the nursery and its responsibilities are fully met. The governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery and share fully in shaping its direction. Their involvement in the life of the school has improved since the last inspection.
41. The school development plan is an effective tool, which is extremely well focused on improving provision for children. Both staff and governors are actively involved in the process of identifying and meeting priorities. The local authority manages the school's budget and the small amount of funding available to school is well thought out and used. Effective use is made of new technology and specific grants are used well.
42. The headteacher is extremely well supported by a very knowledgeable, highly skilled and dedicated team of teachers and nursery nurses. Both the headteacher and the governors regularly review the work of staff and have actively monitored their performance in the classroom and the outcome of children's learning. The quality of monitoring is very high and carried out regularly. This has been maintained very well since the last inspection. The nursery also provides a very high-quality training environment for both student teachers and nursery nurses.
43. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers and an excellent provision of nursery nurses. All members of staff work very hard and are suitably qualified to teach all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and their expertise is good across the different areas of the curriculum. The professional competence of the nursery nurses and their sharing of responsibilities are a significant strength of the school. Their support makes a very good contribution to the quality of learning of children. Members of staff work well as a team, meeting regularly to plan work, assess children and evaluate what has already been taught. The headteacher co-ordinates the provision for special educational needs and statutory requirements are met. The register is appropriately reviewed and updated. Targets are effectively written for individual children in consultation with the staff. Children on the register are

supported by all staff through both withdrawal and classroom involvement. Visiting agencies are very complimentary of the quality of provision available to the children with special educational needs.

44. The excellent space available, both indoors and outside, offers a highly rewarding experience. In addition, there are quiet areas for specific withdrawal sessions, such as speech therapy, a fully equipped kitchen and a confidential office for the headteacher. The nursery is also fortunate to have ample storage space. The overall supply of learning resources is of the highest quality, which is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, the imaginative play area has been turned into an inviting Chinese restaurant with authentic crockery, chopsticks, wok, menus and Chinese clothes for the children to dress up in. The music area is well equipped with a very wide variety of instruments including some that reflect different cultures. The outside area is safe, spacious and very well resourced and designed to enrich learning opportunities for children throughout the day. Since the last inspection a chequered garden with scented plants has been created and trees and shrubs planted. New climbing equipment, wheeled toys, garden seating and storage equipment have been bought. These improvements to the outside area, including the ambitious project to create a waterway, provide a wonderful setting for young children's learning. The adjacent woodland also enhances learning opportunities and has a positive impact on the standards achieved by the children. Appropriate tools are available such as pumps, flags, materials to make signs and suitable 'working gear' to dress up in the play station. The school also has a very good supply of big books and a very comfortable reading area. All resources are readily accessible to staff, and, where appropriate, to children also. They are suitable to the ages and needs of the children and provide high-quality learning experiences when they are used. All staff, whether teachers, nursery nurses or lunchtime supervisors, make a very positive contribution to the curriculum.

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

45. This nursery has no weaknesses.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
27	36	32	5	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)	50
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	6

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

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

## **Teachers and classes**

### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	4.4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.4:1
--------------------------------	-------

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial note**

This school has a non-delegated budget; its funding is managed and controlled centrally by the local education authority. No deficit was carried forward from the 1999/2000 budget into the current year.

## **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	162,264
Total expenditure	167,417
Expenditure per pupil	3,348
Balance brought forward from previous year	n/a
Balance carried forward to next year	n/a

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	69
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	12	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	88	8	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	85	12	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	12	4	4	65
The teaching is good.	88	4	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	23	0	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	4	0	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	19	4	0	31
The school works closely with parents.	88	8	0	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	88	4	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	15	0	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	4	4	0	42

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

## **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**

46. Most children enter the nursery with immature skills in personal and social development but exceed very well the learning goals in this area by the time they leave. This shows very good achievement and reflects the high-quality teaching for personal and social development where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can do. All staff have a very clear understanding of how young children learn and the children clearly feel very safe and happy in the school. This gives them the confidence to take the opportunities the staff provide. Children's response is very good and they contribute to their learning in many ways. They show very good levels of concentration and interest and have a strong motivation for learning. The children are always curious and are always willing to try out different activities that challenge them. For example, they enjoy exploring the wooded area outside, experimenting with face paints and watching baking mixtures turn into cakes after cooking. As they start to attend the nursery full time, levels of independence rapidly increase and the children themselves initiate activities, such as 'washing-up' in the role-play area, building tall towers with bricks or looking at books with their friends. Their high levels of involvement are evident when they concentrate on their cutting, sticking and drawing skills. They gain further interest and growing confidence as they develop skills such as cutting fruit, creating mosaics or designing their own signs for their make-believe railway station.
47. Children play together well in the sand and in the role-play area. They take turn on the outdoor climbing equipment and co-operate when using the wheeled vehicles. They share resources when making clay models and share their ideas when working in the 'Chinese Restaurant'. At story time and in music sessions they listen well and co-operate with adults. When sharing things; for example, the water jug at lunchtimes or seats in the reading area, they respect the rights of other children. When they first start nursery they quickly feel confident to leave their carers and trust the adults. Very high-quality relationships are quickly formed. The older children talk about their families and will happily chat about what they have been doing at home, with clear references to their siblings during the course of the day.
48. As the children become settled in the nursery, they become aware of themselves as part of a group. Through a very good programme of activities they also gain an understanding of other cultures and this provides excellent preparation for them to live and work in a multicultural society. For example, they celebrate the Chinese New Year and can talk about the different kinds of food that are eaten in that country, such as a noodles and stir-fry vegetables. A wealth of very good resources also stimulates the children's learning and deepens their understanding of other views, beliefs and cultures. Many opportunities are also provided for the children to interact with different kinds of people, such as meeting firemen and both train and bus drivers.
49. The children independently make choices for themselves during the day, taking the initiative to follow their interests indoors or out in the garden area. For example, one group of children initiated the construction of a train after their journey on one. This was constructed from large plastic blocks, tyres and a steering wheel. They all know their obligations in the school's routines and accept the associated responsibilities. These routines enable all the children to work and develop confidently and happily

when alone in groups. The children respond to their name cards on the table at the start of lunch session and always readily make a start at the prepared activities. The adults provide excellent role models for the children. They also treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to understand one another's point of view. For instance, exchanges at the lunch tables are commendably mature and social interaction is a real strength. All children know that they must tidy up at the end of every session. By the time the children leave the nursery they are confident, have high self-esteem and are aware of and sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. This is observed in their helpful responses towards other children who have just started nursery.

50. This very high-quality provision is supported by an effective policy and a scheme of work, which gives very good advice on its promotion through a wide range of opportunities across all areas of learning. Books, toys and other resources are carefully chosen to ensure that children are not restricted by cultural bias. Attainment in this area of learning was considered satisfactory at the last inspection. Although the quality of teaching was considered good, it has improved and standards have risen as a result.

### **Communication, language and literature**

51. Although some children start nursery with poorly developed speech, the vast majority of children have appropriate levels of speech at the age of three. However, by the time that they are ready to leave the nursery they have attained very good standards that are well above the expected levels within the Early Learning Goals. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were considered satisfactory overall. As the result of the excellent opportunities for talking to adults, planned discussion sessions and role-play activities, the children make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills and attain standards well above the early learning goals in. All staff are excellent role models for children and extend their vocabulary very well. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, develop confidence and hold effective conversations with adults and each other. They listen sensitively to each other during discussion times and ask well-thought-out questions to help their understanding. For example, in group time with older children, they readily talked about the types of vegetables that could be used to make a 'stir-fry' dish. They discussed where and how the various vegetables grew, took turns to smell and feel them and then chatted about their particular favourites. These sessions make a significant contribution to the gains in knowledge in all areas of learning within the Foundation Stage. Very well prepared and organised story-times motivate children well and encourage them in focused listening. The provision for a wide variety of role-play situations is very good and children quickly learn to use speech in different situations. During the inspection they were heard holding imaginative conversations and acting out roles of train drivers and rail passengers, waiters and customers in a Chinese restaurant and 'at home' in the play-house area. Children have good knowledge of a range of rhymes and poetry such as 'A Mouse Lived in a Little Hole' and 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and recite them from memory.
52. As a result of very good story-time sessions, children's attitudes to reading and their knowledge of stories are very good. Children start sharing books with adults and friends and regularly take books home. They talk confidently about their books and children of all ages and abilities, including those with special, educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, 'read' in the book area. They know that books have titles and that pictures give clues as to the content; they use this to

help choose books that they like and they handle with care. They talk with great enthusiasm about the characters and plot in their favourite stories. They know how books work and that print is read from left to right. They know that print carries meaning and 'read' the story by focusing on the pictures. Very good interaction by the support teacher for children for whom English is an additional language was observed when the books were read and discussed with the child in both English and the child's home language, which was Punjabi. Higher-attaining children recognise some common words.

53. As soon as they enter the nursery, children are encouraged to make marks on paper, which represent meaning, or draw their activity. By the time they leave, all children recognise their own names, as is expected in the Early Learning Goals and a significant number write them forming letters correctly, although not yet of a uniform size. Children make their own little books and make marks for meaning. The higher achievers write 'emergently' using the computer. Many children make patterns to symbolise words and sentences. A significant number of children randomly use letters in their writing. A wide range of activities allows children to use writing and drawing equipment, form letters and make marks. Further opportunities are provided for further developing older children's writing. For example, they make signs for their role-play areas such as 'station ticket office and waiting room'.
54. At the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching was considered sound. The quality of both teaching and learning is now considered very good. The range of well-planned activities support children's language development and move them on in their knowledge and skills. The children respond very positively to language activities and as a result of very skilled teaching their behaviour is always at least very good and is frequently excellent. Questions are used very well to focus, check and extend children's thinking and to encourage listening. Throughout the day staff continually focus on conversations with children and use these to increase vocabulary. Both teachers and nursery nurses are skilled storytellers and this significantly supports children's very good attitudes to reading. Very good links are made with other areas of learning. For example, during the inspection, the theme for activity was 'Journeys' and books such as 'Mrs Armitage on Wheels', 'Whatever next' and 'Alice and Jack' were used as starting points for a very wide range of different activities. Appropriate opportunities are provided to develop phonic knowledge and word recognition skills. In a group-time activity older children were observed discussing the difference between the two words 'carrots' and 'celery' and, although they agreed they started with the same letter, they knew that they were not the same word.
55. Curriculum planning is very good with a detailed policy and scheme of work that provide a broad and balanced range of activities. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported in this area of learning. There is an excellent supply of books, games and other activities to encourage language development. Effective consideration has been given to providing a wide range of role-play situations.

## **Mathematical development**

56. By the end of their fifth term, when the children move to first school at the age of five, the vast majority are likely to achieved well above the expected Early Learning Goals. This is because of the very good teaching that takes place in this area of learning.
57. All the key issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Mathematics is now more visible in the nursery. A special area has been created with a good



range of resources and books to develop mathematics; for example, to provide a comparison of different sizes and shapes and number recognition. A good range of photographs illustrate mathematics in the environment such as house numbers and a 'For Sale' sign with telephone number, food labels with prices or '50 per cent off' marked on them, and a washing machine with its programme numbers. There are small-group activity times specifically for mathematics. The needs of the summer born children are being addressed to ensure that they enter school with appropriate experience within the National Numeracy Strategy. Higher achievers are now catered for well and this shows very considerable improvement since the last inspection.

58. From starting at the nursery, children are made aware of the mathematics all around them. They learn number rhymes such as 'Five currant buns' and 'Jumping on the bed'. Most know that they need two pieces of bread to make a sandwich and that when it is cut in half it makes two. In one session observed during the inspection, two children in a group of five understood that when the sandwich was cut again you would get four pieces. Visual props to help them remember, such as 'Three Monkeys on the Bed', support the most successful learning.
59. By the time they leave the nursery, most children can count to ten and several can count well beyond this. One child, with exceptional ability, ordered number mats to 20, knew the difference between odd and even numbers and recalled times tables such as 'three fives are 15' when playing 'snakes and ladders'. Most children are developing the use of mathematical language, such as 'more' or 'less' and know that 'one more penny makes six' or 'one penny less than six is five' when playing the 'Snake Game'. Many show sustained concentration and talk about the shapes of everyday objects; for example, dough shapes, car tyres, and wooden blocks used for construction. They describe simple journeys and choose suitable shapes for building structures. One child made matching puppets, others make repeating patterns using pegboards. Older children use programmable toys to understand directions.
60. Very good links are made with creative development when children print. Others make picture collages with squares, triangles rectangles and circles. High-quality links are made with literacy. For example, a higher-achieving child described his pattern, 'It's a monster. I used a circle and one cut in half. Three semi-circles and that one's a red circle underneath. A long triangle and two rectangles - that's its hair and three rectangles – that's where the arm is and that triangle its tummy.'
61. Children are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They show a very good level of concentration and are willing to 'have a go', even when wrong. Behaviour is exemplary. Children, including those with special educational needs, the higher achievers, and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress.
62. The quality of teaching seen was very good and, in one instance, excellent. The staff have very high expectations. They develop mathematics through well-planned and focused mathematical activities, which are presented in an exciting and stimulating manner. In this way, children are encouraged to use their growing understanding of how to be problem solvers and thinkers. For example, one child counted to 29 and got stuck. Sensitive, challenging questions from the teacher led the child beyond this number.
63. Children learn to practise their counting skills, develop mathematical language and recognise and understand the properties of shape, in real-life situations. The new scheme of work is comprehensive and detailed, although in the early stage of

development. Careful planning by the staff, assessment and informal observation of children's skills and understanding, during a wide range of activities, ensure that the staff know the children's mathematical abilities. They lead individual learning through skilful intervention and by posing questions that make the children think. Excellent relationships between children and adults support developing confidence in the subject.

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

64. Very good improvement has been made in knowledge and understanding of the world since the last inspection.
65. Children enter the nursery with a basic general knowledge. The staff build on this knowledge to help children understand more about the place where they live and the area around the nursery. By the time they leave, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world are very good. All, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, make very good progress during their time in the nursery. This is the result of the very good range of experiences provided. These activities stimulate interest and extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding. The rich outdoor environment, including the adjoining wood, is very well used to support learning. During the inspection one group went on a walk to look at winter colours. They collected twigs to observe and then talked about the colours that they had seen. Children investigate everyday materials using their senses. They grow a range of plants from seeds or bulbs and develop their powers of observation, understanding that water is required to make them grow. The older children can name and recognise a range of different fruits, including a pineapple, an avocado and a mango, and they talk about the shape, the colour, and how they feel and smell. Very good links are made with literacy, mathematics and creative development. For example, a group of children were observed sharing the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. All were willing to have a go and guess the name of unknown fruits and describe whether they felt hard or soft, bumpy or smooth and whether they had a pattern or not. The higher-achieving children described the mango as an oval and used zero when the basket was empty. They also drew patterns extremely well, 'like diamonds' for the pineapple.
66. At the woodwork bench the children begin to use tools carefully, sawing and hammering nails with success, especially when balsa wood is available for the youngest or less experienced children.
67. Children develop information technology skills and learn to use the computer confidently. When using computers, more experienced children manipulate the mouse, moving the cursor with accuracy. The oldest children can click and drag to both move and match shapes. However, some of the youngest children find using the mouse difficult and the school does not have a roller ball to support young learners with this skill. There are good opportunities for children to use computers independently and one child proudly explained how he printed his design without help. Computers are used effectively to support learning in other areas; for example, matching and counting numbers or designing and making patterns.
68. The children begin to gain a sound foundation for early learning in history and geography through a range of visits and visitors to school. They gain knowledge of the past from both discussing events in their life with the adults around them. Older pupils know that the school is 50 years old and remember the birthday party held as a special event last year.

69. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning and are excited at the world around them. They share enthusiastically what they find out and work well together in pairs or groups with very good concentration. They share resources and most patiently wait their turn. They are developing appropriate concern for the environment and their responsibility for it. From their earliest days in the nursery, all children learn to select and use tools safely to construct and build. They have a good sense of how things join and are often imaginative in the way designs are made, but less so in how they might be improved.
70. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with one excellent lesson observed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The best lessons are characterised by adults supporting, suggesting, discussing activities with the children and often joining in. Staff have good knowledge and understanding and this, together with their enthusiasm, ensures that all children make at least good, and often very good, progress. Activities and group sessions are well planned, prepared and resourced, and staff have generally high expectations of what the children can achieve. Group sessions have a brisk pace, which keeps the children motivated. These activities have a positive effect on children's development, especially when adults use opportunities that occur through observation or discussion to move learning on. The most effective questioning helps children to investigate further and clarify their understanding. Exceptional teaching develops thinking and problem-solving skills. This happened in the outside play station when an older child fixed his sign to a post with adhesive gum. High-quality discussion took place, prompting the child to suggest a better method to fix the sign more securely. The children work well together and excellent adult intervention, using sensitive questioning and involvement, extends learning to a high level.
71. The curriculum is very well planned in this stimulating environment, which supports independence. There is an excellent range of resources for the curriculum, including writing materials, used both indoor and outside. Books, posters and pictures to support activities are used effectively.

## **Physical development**

72. By the time the children leave the nursery at the age of five, most of them are attaining standards in physical development that are well above the expected levels outlined in the Early Learning Goals. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were considered appropriate for their age. All children, including those who have special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, have equal access to all activities, take part in a friendly way and enjoy physical play at their own rate and pace. The imaginative development of the outdoor play area for the nursery has been a major factor in helping the children to make very good progress. The availability of a wide range of carefully organised equipment and apparatus enables children to make good progress in their physical development and to develop and refine their skills as they move and balance. They move around the inside of the school confidently and quickly learn to find their way safely to the toilets, kitchen and community room. They confidently move around the garden area and negotiate challenging pathways in the 'magic wood'. They use the play equipment skilfully and with increasing confidence and control. Children plan and organise their activities with imagination and show a clear awareness of space. They show a very good awareness of others and, when using the bicycles, tricycles and scooters, are aware of the need to carefully watch out for their friends as they pedal around the play area. The children quickly learn to use the large outdoor play equipment to extend

their physical skills and powers of co-ordination, running, jumping, climbing and sliding with increasing skill and confidence. For example, they successfully learn to swing forwards and backwards on both climbing frames and ropes. They are also able to move spontaneously to music and respond to a variety of different rhythms with both confidence and pleasure. The children start to understand that they need to exercise to keep healthy and older children learn to feel the difference in their heartbeat after exercise. The children's response to physical activities is very good. They are enthusiastic and always keen to take a full part in all activities. They learn to take turns and share apparatus and equipment.

73. All children, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, make very good progress in developing a range of skills using their hands. They handle construction kits, writing and drawing pencils and tools and use materials, such as dough and clay, with increasing precision and fine hand and finger control. When using pencils and pens, they hold them correctly. They use scissors carefully and other tools with accuracy and skill. They begin to use tools carefully and hammer nails with some success. When using the computers, they manipulate the mouse and move the cursor with accuracy.
74. The quality of teaching for physical development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Children follow the teacher's instructions carefully, work safely and have very positive attitudes. Teachers and nursery nurses set up well-planned activities to promote the physical development of both large and small movements. Safety procedures are very good and staff make children aware of rules, such as where to park their tricycles and scooters. Staff teach children to handle and use tools properly. They adjust pencil and paint brush grips to ensure that bad habits do not go uncorrected. The use of the outdoor play equipment is planned very well and covers all areas of learning. The activities reflect those activities organised for the indoor curriculum. The policy and planning documents contain clear guidance on learning experiences and examples of activities to encourage the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes related to physical development. Very good management ensures that the children gain much from their physical experiences. Outdoor provision is evaluated daily and activities modified or extended accordingly. Teachers and nursery nurses conscientiously undertake the assessment of the children's development.

### **Creative development**

75. Very good improvement has been made in creative development since the last inspection.
76. The children make very good progress in developing their imaginative and creative skills. The nursery is a rich environment that encourages the development of very good attitudes, independence, imagination and creative skills. A wide variety of opportunities are provided for the children to paint and print, exploring different media, styles and colours. They begin to appreciate different textures, whether through textiles, clay, sand or paint. Children experiment successfully with both a wide range of percussion instruments and a piano. They also enjoy singing and adjust the volume of their voices when appropriate. Many talk enthusiastically and demonstrate their feelings about a situation. This happened during a music session when the children were introduced to a range of instruments and were highly motivated by the variety of sounds and range of instruments available. They played a violin and were mesmerised by the sound, showing expressions of wonder. Two achieved a few notes on a saxophone, to their great delight. The adults' very good subject

knowledge, very good use of quality resources and strong relationships with the children support learning very well.

77. Role play is encouraged, whether in the imaginative play areas in the home corner, in the Chinese restaurant and clearing away after a 'meal', dressing up or in the outside play station. Children talk about what they are doing and act out stories and events. Many are very independent, not needing to rely on adult intervention for help.
78. The overall quality of teaching is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was judged satisfactory. Subject knowledge is now generally good and most adults have high expectations of what children can achieve. Activities, which provide different learning opportunities, are prepared, managed and supervised well. Praise is used effectively to encourage and support the children and, in the best sessions, skilful use of questioning ensures learning. A wide and interesting range of work is provided to ensure that the children are prepared very well for the National Curriculum. Work covered in this area of learning makes a strong contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Arts projects, visits and other very good links are made with the community. For example, visiting musicians enrich the curriculum and provide excellent opportunities for creative development.