

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHAPEL STREET NURSERY SCHOOL**

Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109421

Headteacher: Mrs Patricia Morgan

Reporting inspector: Mr C Rhodes  
16408

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 May 2001

Inspection number: 197798

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Russell Street Luton Beds
Postcode:	LU1 5EA
Telephone number:	01582 413552
Fax number:	01582 413552
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Rosalind Paul
Date of previous inspection:	29/09/1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
16408	Chris Rhodes	Registered inspector
9798	Vivienne Ashworth	Lay inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Staffordshire and Midlands Consortium

Mr I H Jones  
Kingston Centre  
Fairway  
Stafford  
ST16 3TW

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Chapel Street Nursery School is situated very near the centre of Luton. There are 75 children on roll, of whom 26 stay all day. Attainment on entry is below average. Many children are of white UK heritage but about a third have Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Pakistani, Indian or Chinese backgrounds. English is an additional language in about a third of cases, especially where the pupils come from Asian, Cantonese or non-English speaking European countries. Approximately two in every five children has a special educational need, which is a much higher proportion than is found in the average school. The school has extra staff and equipment in order to meet their particular needs. Three children have statements indicating how their individual severe or complex needs will be met. Two of the twenty six fulltime children are entitled to free school meals. About a quarter of the children attending the school continue there until the start of statutory education in the term following their fifth birthdays.

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

This is a very good school. The younger children make very good progress and attain standards by the age of four that are close to those expected of children at the end of the Reception year. The older children make good progress and many are well on course to achieve the standards expected of their age by the time they move to infant schools. The teaching is good, and teachers and nursery nurses work together very effectively. Many children have special educational needs, but each is valued and respected as an integral member of the school community. The headteacher has a passion for high quality nursery education and leads a strong team very successfully. The school makes very effective use of its delegated budget and the additional funds allocated for children with special educational needs, and provides very good value for money.

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

- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well.
- The teaching is good.
- All children make good progress. Many four year olds make very good progress and reach the levels expected of children at the end of their Reception year.
- The school is particularly successful in the ways it includes, values and respects every child, whatever their background or personal need.
- Children love coming to school and behave very well throughout the day.
- Parents are fully involved in all aspects of their children's education.

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

- The ways in which learning is stimulated by using the outside areas.
- The achievement of older more able children.

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

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

The school was last inspected in 1997 when there were no key issues. It continues to be a very good school. The staff have worked hard and successfully to build on the minor areas

for improvement identified in the previous report. Children continue to make good progress and previous standards have been maintained. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching, the strength of the partnership with parents, the quality of leadership and the levels of achievement by the nursery aged children. The use of the building has been extended imaginatively, and extra features have been added to meet the needs of children with physical disabilities. The overall rate of improvement has been good, and the school is very well placed to continue to be innovative and successful in its drive for excellence.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the children's achievements in relation to the national early learning goals by the time they leave the school.

<b>Performance in:</b>		<b>Key:</b>	
Language and literacy	B	Well above average	A
Mathematics	B	Above average	B
Personal and social development	B	Average	C
Other areas of the curriculum	B	Below average	D
		Well below average	E
		Very low	E*

Many of the nursery aged children have reached almost all of the nationally agreed early learning goals at levels expected of children a year older and who are about to start full time formal education. As many start in the nursery with below average attainment and 40% have special educational needs, this is a very good achievement. They make very good progress because the teaching is good and the school is especially successful in creating a calm but stimulating environment in which they feel secure and keen to learn. The group of older children who remain in the school until the term following their fifth birthday make good progress, but their curriculum is not quite so well planned and higher attaining pupils are not consistently given work that stretches them. The progress made by children with special educational needs is very good. It is carefully monitored, and they are given appropriate social, physical or learning targets so that they can build on previous success. Those with English as an additional language make good progress, and soon cope readily with all classroom activities. Staff are aware of their particular needs and meet them sensitively.

Nearly all children achieve the early learning goals for their personal, social and emotional development very quickly. A minority have a recognised difficulty and teachers' records indicate good individual progress. Most children are well on line to achieve the goals identified for knowledge and understanding of the world, and mathematical, physical and creative development. They have a good understanding of basic number facts, enjoy counting and using numbers, and use early mathematical language accurately when talking about their work or serving in the 'shop'. Most achieve the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. A few individual children find it difficult to talk in more than single words. Listening skills are well developed, and all children love looking at books and are developing appropriate early reading skills. The small group of older more able children enjoy reading but are not achieving high enough standards in writing. The group has a secure early understanding of basic number facts, shape and measurement.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children have positive attitudes to learning and are very happy in school
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children behave well without reminders. Good behaviour and manners are particularly evident during the school meal,
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children gain in confidence quickly. They work and play collaboratively with each other, sharing and taking turns. They form close, trusting relationships with staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

The school is particularly successful in showing children how they can all live and work together. Children from all cultures, backgrounds, or with physical or other difficulties, feel secure and respected for who they are. All children understand the nature of disability and do not allow it to get in the way of learning and playing with their friends. Attendance is not a statutory requirement but registers are maintained carefully, and all required procedures are securely in place.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 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.*

The quality of teaching is good and is the main reason why children learn effectively and make good progress. A quarter of lessons, 27%, were very good or better. A further 55% was good and 18% was satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is effective because teachers and nursery nurses plan together carefully and have a shared understanding of what and how they want the children to learn. They place a high emphasis on the development of personal and social skills, and children respond confidently to the good example they are set. This is especially evident in children's positive attitudes to ethnicity, and the respect and understanding they show towards those with special educational needs or physical disabilities.

Staff have a very good insight into the needs of nursery aged children. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively and teachers provide a stimulating range of activities to encourage speech, discussion and creative thinking. Each day has its own excitement and, in the best lessons, includes planned opportunities for experiencing 'awe and wonder'. Stories are told with flair and the children listen enthralled. Teachers are good at planning 'natural' occasions for children to use and develop their early writing and counting skills. Questions are asked skilfully so that children have to think and answer in greater depth. Teachers are



patient with those who need time and, in the best examples, structure the lessons carefully so that children are kept alert and move purposefully through a series of linked activities.

Planning is detailed and judgements about children's success are made carefully against the 'stepping stones' indicated in national guidance. Teachers' weekly plans do not make enough of the opportunities for children of all ages to use the outside areas at times other than those allocated for physical development. The planning for the older, reception aged children is not so thorough, and although they make good progress in terms of their previous achievements, they are not given enough work that challenges them to achieve even more.

Children's quality of learning is good because they are happy, feel secure and liked, and are interested in the activities the staff plan for them. They work hard, concentrate for a considerable lengths of time and are proud of what they have achieved as individuals or as a group. Children who have special educational needs or English as an additional language learn effectively because staff have a very good understanding of their requirements, planning is detailed, and adults work with them closely.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It is very good for nursery aged children and good for those who stay in the school until the term following their fifth birthday. The planned curriculum does not make enough of the opportunities available in the outdoor areas or for more able older children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	A particular strength of the school. Children make good progress in a context of respect and carefully focused support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Children make good progress because their needs are understood and met, and their contributions to the school are valued and respected.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for social development is particularly strong. Children quickly become caring and thoughtful, and have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. There are many planned opportunities to learn about the cultural diversity found in Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A particular strength of the school. Children from all backgrounds and circumstances thrive and grow. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring children's welfare are excellent.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has an inspirational but very practical approach to nursery education. Senior staff carry out their delegated responsibilities very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Many governors are newly appointed and the school has just been given its first delegated budget. Governors are working hard to bring in the new systems and to understand their new responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There are agreed systems for monitoring and evaluating standards but these are not implemented regularly enough.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Particularly effective use is made of grants and local education authority funding for special educational needs.

Excellent and imaginative use is made of the building. Governors understand the importance of applying the principles of best value, and are developing effective ways in which they will be applied.

## 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>• Children like coming to school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• It is very easy to talk to staff.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and enables the children to make good progress.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More things to do with the children at home.</li> <li>• More information about how the children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive views of the school. The amount of homework is appropriate. The school is very active in making sure that parents are kept fully informed. There is daily contact with most parents. Those who do not collect or bring their children to school themselves are contacted by telephone and share a 'Home and School' booklet every day. A more formal opportunity to discuss children's progress is being considered.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL.**

#### **The headteacher leads and manages the school very well**

1. The headteacher has a very clear and well considered view of nursery education. She has successfully maintained and developed the many strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection. She is passionate in her belief that only the best will do, and that it can be successfully achieved within the school. This is evident in the imaginative and informative displays that greet parents and visitors entering the building, and through feeling her presence in every aspect of school life. Her approach is very practical and is based on a determination to work through others as well as herself to achieve their joint aims. It is seen in her own teaching, her close professional relationships with parents, the way in which she is encouraging use of the empty rooms in the school for pre-school and parent support groups, her care and ability to find time for those under stress, her realism about what still has to be achieved, and her deep pleasure in the achievements of the children and members of the team. It has enabled her to recruit and nurture a team of teachers and nursery nurses who work hard with her, the governors, parents and children in the achievement of their vision.
2. The school has been particularly successful in managing the allocation of additional funding for the special educational needs 'project' that provides additional resources for nursery aged children within the Borough who have complex or severe special educational needs. Under the headteacher's leadership, the school has welcomed this as an opportunity to create a truly inclusive society in which all children work and learn together. The headteacher works very closely with a wide range of outside agencies, and the school gains a great deal from their regular involvement.
3. The governing body works very hard to support the school. Many of its members are recent appointments, and the school is in the first months of responsibility for a delegated budget. Governors share the headteacher's pride in the achievements of the school and are enthusiastic about being part of its future. The headteacher and new chair are working closely together so that they can help governors develop their roles, particularly in knowing what questions to ask, finding out more about the school through visits, and how to make the best use of the budget. Current arrangements for financial planning and control are good and the school provides very good value for money.
4. The day-to-day management and running of the school is very good. Staff are enthusiastic and hard working, attend training courses regularly and are up to date on new national initiatives. Office systems work well, and the school secretary and her assistant provide a calm but well ordered administrative centre to the school. The school has set itself good targets for improvement, but is not specific enough in saying how success will be measured. This makes it harder for the headteacher and governors to measure progress. There are appropriate systems through which the headteacher can monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning on a formal basis, but these are not used often enough, and is one of the reasons why the comparative under-achievement of some of the older pupils has not been identified sooner.

## **The teaching is good.**

5. As at the time of the previous inspection, the quality of teaching is a strength of the school and a major factor in explaining its success. The overall quality remains good, but has in fact improved, as there is now a higher proportion of very good or better teaching. Eleven lessons were observed during the current inspection and all the teaching was satisfactory or better. Four out of five lessons were good or better, and one in five lessons was very good or better. Teaching is effective because teachers and nursery nurses plan and work together and have a shared understanding of what and how they want the children to achieve. This strength has been maintained since the previous inspection, and now includes the three additional staff appointed for children with special educational needs. The effective collaboration can be seen in the weekly planning meeting, the joint preparation before morning and afternoon sessions, and the detailed discussions of the achievements and needs of individual children. Children learn more effectively because all the adults are part of the same team.
6. Individual children's progress is assessed in great detail. This enables staff to know the children thoroughly and to plan appropriate work. This is particularly evident in the care given to work with children with severe or complex special educational needs. Targets are chosen carefully so that they are small but significant steps on the road to improvement, and are recorded in individual education plans. Additional support is provided as needed. There is excellent support for those children who are autistic, have physical disabilities, are particularly withdrawn or have other learning difficulties. The support is an integral part of the whole lesson and in accordance with the school's highly successful policy to include, value and develop all children in every activity. The same level of sensitive and informed support is given to those children whose first language is not English.
7. All staff have a very good understanding of the needs of nursery aged children and have high expectations of what they can achieve. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively and teachers provide a stimulating range of activities to encourage speech, discussion and creative thinking. Each day has its own excitement and, in the best lessons, includes planned opportunities for 'awe and wonder'. One group, for example, prepared for their flight in an aircraft. Names had been 'written' on real boarding cards at the check-in desk, cases were heaved into place after a brief mathematical discussion of 'large' and 'small', seats allocated by number and then the children entered the 'aircraft.' They sat in a small darkened room watching the projection of a slowly spinning colour photograph of the world on the wall. The effect was magical because the children believed. "I can see Africa," said one pointing. The music stopped to signal that the flight had arrived 'arrived' in Brazil, and the children imagined what it might be like outside in a hot sticky jungle. That night the teachers planned how they would borrow a real pet snake for the following week's lesson.
8. Teachers place an appropriately high emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills, and the children in turn respond confidently to the good example set by all the adults in the school. This is especially evident in children's positive attitudes to ethnicity, and their respect and understanding of those with special educational needs or physical disabilities. Children are managed very effectively, and the rare examples of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with firmly and fairly. Teachers are good at planning 'natural' occasions for children to use and develop their early writing and counting skills.

Teachers are very effective in using classroom resources to respond to children's questions, and thus encourage them to find out things for themselves. Remarks such as "We might find that out by looking in this book" or "Let's check on the globe whether we'll pass India on our way to Brazil" involve the children actively in their own learning. Questions are asked skilfully so that children have to think and answer in greater depth. Teachers are patient with those who need time but, in the best lessons, plan the work carefully so that children are kept alert and move purposefully through a series of linked activities. Teaching is not as effective as it could be on the small number of occasions when teachers supervise the work, rather than being actively involved and motivating the children to greater success through their own example.

9. The good quality teaching has a positive impact on the quality of children's learning, which is also good because they are happy, feel secure and liked, and are interested in the activities the staff plan for them. Children usually work hard, concentrate for considerable lengths of time and are proud of what they have achieved as individuals or as a group. Children who have special educational needs or English as an additional language learn effectively because staff have a very good understanding of their requirements, planning is detailed, and there are enough adults for them to have individual or small group support.

**All children make good progress. Many four year olds make very good progress and reach the levels expected of children at the end of their Reception year.**

10. Many children start school with levels of understanding, and personal, social and communication skills, that are generally below those expected for three year olds. Some find it very difficult to speak at all, and many only use single words in their answers to a teacher's questions. They settle into school very quickly and become well-established and confident learners. They make at least good progress, and often very good progress in all the areas of learning and, by the time they are four, have attained the early learning goals in almost all areas of their development. This is very good overall progress, a measure of the school's success and the result of the good teaching, commitment, close links with parents and the hard work of the whole school team. The high standards seen at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.
11. The children who remain in the school until the end of the term following their fifth birthday make good progress overall, although the three or four more able children are not given enough structured opportunities to develop their early literacy and numeracy skills, especially in writing.
12. Children of all abilities make good progress. Teachers' records and careful observations demonstrate that those with considerable social or learning difficulties thrive in the school. One child, whose life experiences have led to a decision not to speak at all, will now work closely and trustingly with a nursery nurse, and is starting to work happily alongside other children in experimenting, for example, with jars of water to see how many small containers are needed to fill a larger pot. Staff show great patience and await the day when this child feels confident enough to speak. Children with other special educational needs do well because their individual work plans are very carefully written, and the very positive feeling in the school encourages them to do their best. This is why several parents keep them in the school until the term following their fifth birthday. The additional teacher and two extra nursery nurses allocated to the school are very much part

of the staff team and, although they work mainly with particular children, everyone benefits from their presence and encouragement in group activities. Children with physical disabilities benefit from the imaginative way in which the building has been adapted to their needs, the wide range of specialist equipment, but most of all, from the school's positive approach to all children whatever their particular challenge. Children whose first language is not English are well supported, and learn quickly from staff and their friends.

13. Most children have achieved the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development by the time they leave the school. They understand and follow the daily routines, and know how these are reflected in real life. Taking one's turn in a shopping queue, for example. They are very confident in choosing activities and resources, and in asking politely if they may have seconds at lunchtime. They have a growing self-reliance and independence in dressing and undressing, and going to the toilet. They love listening to stories and singing, and join in readily with choruses and well known phrases. They imitate the various voices, such as the troll's demands when each of the goats comes tripping across his bridge, and enjoy the excitement of the final 'kick over the hill'. They take turns and help one another. They are quick to praise when someone does really well. This is very important in classrooms where so many children have severe or complex special educational needs and reflects the school's positive ethos. Relationships are good, especially between the more isolate children and the adults they have now learned to trust. All children show an increasing respect for each other and the many cultures represented within the school.
14. Most children achieve the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. Their skills in writing are appropriate, nearly all recognise their own names and many are starting to write them correctly. One child also has a signature for 'special papers'. Everyone understands that marks carry meaning, and use them in many role play situations. The more able older children can copy words under the teacher's text and form their letters accurately. The staff encourage good quality speech, and set good examples through their own conversations with children. Many younger children are hesitant at first to use more than a few words, but teachers' notes record the considerable progress they have made. Children enjoy books, and know that print carries meaning, and that the text contains information as well as stories. There is a collection of books available for general browsing in the library but this is fairly limited as many books are stored in project boxes ready for the themed activities that occur during the year. This limits the older children's opportunities for choice and a chance to look at a wider range of materials.
15. Although it was not possible to observe much direct work with numbers as it is the theme for Mondays, discussion with children and observation of other lessons show that most are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals for mathematical development. They have a good mathematical vocabulary, and understand and use words such as 'more' and 'less', 'bigger' and 'smaller' in their creative play. The oldest children are becoming more confident in adding numbers to five, and all know how important it is to count the coins accurately when shopping. They recognise numbers to ten and the more able children can explain that the wall clock is a circle and the window is a square.
16. Children have many opportunities for physical and creative development within the classrooms, and for increasing their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Opportunities in the playgrounds are more limited, but most children are well on course to achieve the early learning goals. They enjoy running and jumping in the soft play area or outside. They use a wide range of equipment sensibly, steering their 'aircraft' safely through a series of tight spaces, or practising their early games skills by learning to control a ball with a hockey stick. They are adventurous and confident in climbing and enjoy the strenuous physical exercise of bike riding. Children use scissors and dough cutting and rolling tools safely, and understand how to use their fingers to form shapes from soft materials. Children with special educational needs gain in confidence quickly, and staff are skilled in encouraging but not forcing those who are not quite ready for the next step.

17. Overall provision for creative development is good, and children understand that their paintings and drawings are representations of the real world. They learn to be careful observers, using mirrors, for example, to make sure that the pictures in their 'passports' had the correct eye and hair colours. Children enjoy playing creatively in the activity areas, travellers' trailer or the playground shop, boat and house. They respond very well to the special displays that they are encouraged to touch. One child, for example, stood absorbed with a new display of small toy boats. She looked at each one carefully, and started to move them to act out the story she saw in her own mind. Children enjoy listening to and making music, and most can repeat a march rhythm correctly when playing percussion instruments. They sing nursery rhymes and other songs with enjoyment.
18. Children develop a good understanding of the world in which they live. Visits and visitors, ranging from a puppy and a baby to musicians from the County Youth Orchestra, are a regular part of the curriculum. Children know that the school is part of a wider community, and enjoy their active participation in the annual Luton carnival. They learn from each other about the individual journeys they have made, find countries on the globe, and talk about the postcards sent from abroad. There is a weekly focus on a different country. They understand that things change and that they were once babies. They use construction kits successfully to learn how to put things together and take them apart. Some use of computers was seen during the inspection, but it would be unfair to make a judgement of what children know, understand or can do as most of the equipment had been removed in two recent burglaries and has yet to be replaced.

**The school is particularly successful in the ways it includes, values and respects every child, whatever their background or personal need.**

19. The positive recognition of all pupils is central to the school's philosophy, and is led directly by the headteacher with the active support of the chair of governors. The positive outcomes of the school's determination to provide an inclusive education are evident in all its activities.
20. The school's policy of recognising the importance and worth of each individual is seen at its most obvious in the way it welcomes and includes children with a very wide range of severe and complex educational needs. Each child, even the most withdrawn or physically disabled, is a valued member of the school family. They are welcomed and respected for the person they are. This has a profound and positive effect on their perception of themselves, and they see themselves as integral members of the group. A pupil with severe speech problems due a physical disability chatters all the time with their

friends and with adults. The children have learned to understand what is said and chatter back. Isolate children are respected and allowed their space, but are welcomed as members of the work group. Parents are strongly supportive of the school's approach and see this as a major reason why it is a very good school. They recognise that their own children have a good understanding of disability and that it is not something to be feared or rejected. Parents whose children have a special educational need say that the policy is working successfully because their children thrive, are respected and make good progress alongside the other children. The school is particularly successful in its sensitive care of those whose life experiences have been traumatic and have affected the way in which they behave and learn. They too flourish in the security that they find in the school, and respect the firm but sensitive application of rules if their behaviour is unacceptable. The school works very closely with parents whenever this is possible, and forms an active partnership in supporting any child in difficulty.

21. Several children start school with little practical experience of English. Some are recent arrivals from abroad, others are members of British families where English is an additional language. The school is very effective in assessing each child's personal needs and working with parents to encourage the child to learn English so that they can make the most of the school's opportunities. The school has an active approach to racism, and children do not regard others as different because they come from an alternative ethnic background. Teachers work closely with external agencies and makes effective use of translators when necessary. The chair of governors works as a teacher with travellers' children. She recently arranged for the attendance of a travelling child, whose parents worked in the visiting circus, to be linked to the loan of a travellers' trailer for a role play area. Children enjoyed the addition of another 'home' and knew, for example, why it came with a gas bottle and why it was stored outside. Teachers encourage children to talk about their own cultural heritage as part of the school's policy to value the background and contributions of all its members. Cultural differences are respected, for example, in acknowledging that some mothers would not be able to take their children swimming on a day for mixed bathing. All staff are careful in conversation and will rephrase questions quickly if the child does not understand.

**Children love coming to school and behave very well throughout the day.**

22. Parents confirmed at the meeting and in response to the questionnaires that their children came happily to school. This was evident during the inspection in the way they came into classrooms, eager to see what the staff had planned for them to do. Their enthusiasm for school is seen throughout the day in the way they approach their work and the various activities. They feel secure and confident in themselves, and have a very positive approach to learning. They greet staff happily and start relaxed conversations about what they have done or seen since the previous day. Their parents say they can't wait to get to school and miss their friends if they are absent.
23. Children's behaviour is very good. This is a major achievement and reflects the school's strong ethos and high standards. Staff deal quickly, sensitively but firmly with any occasional lapses by individual children. They explain exactly why, for example, misbehaviour at the water table cannot be allowed. Children are taught the difference between right and wrong, and why groups of people have to have rules so that they can work together safely and happily. The staff set a very high standard and positive example in their own relationships and attitudes. The children copy them. Relationships between



children are very good, and boys and girls from all backgrounds play and work comfortably in each other's company. Good manners and politeness are a feature of the school, and are particularly to be seen at lunchtimes. The children eat calmly, with no rush to finish first, use a paper napkin and talk sensibly to their neighbours. Staff set a good example by their own participation in the meal and quiet management of each table. Children enjoy the company of adults and welcome the opportunities to talk to visitors. Behaviour in toilets and in the playground is also good. The children regard the outside areas as an extension of their classrooms and behave as well as they do inside. The high standards seen at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

**Parents are fully involved in all aspects of their children's education.**

24. Parents have the highest regard for the school. They particularly value the ways in which they are welcomed as active partners in all that happens in school. They are as at home in the classrooms as the children themselves, and parents can stay all day if there is a particular concern. Teachers and nursery nurses talk easily with parents, carers or grandparents at the start of each session, and catch up on any news or talk about any area of concern. This gives parents and carers informal daily updates on how their children are doing, and the headteacher is always available should parents want a word. The high standard of involvement noted at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Some children with special educational needs come and go to school by taxi, but the school makes telephone contact with parents or carers at least once a week and share a home/school book.
25. The headteacher sees the families as an extension of the school, and does everything in her power to help them feel involved in their own and their children's education. She encourages mothers with little understanding of spoken English to attend a small group that meets in the school one afternoon a week, and has set up a support group for parents of children with special educational needs. The nurse and specialist teacher also attend. Parents find this very helpful. 'I no longer feel alone,' said one. Several of the group continue to drop into the school's coffee bar area, even when their own children have moved on to infant schools, because they welcome the support and the chance to share worries and successes. The three parents who had attended the English class popped their heads round the door as they collected their children to say just how much they had enjoyed the afternoon.
26. Parents appreciate the quality of the information they get from the school. Newsletters are very informative and well presented. Termly reports are appreciated because they describe the children objectively. Parents feel consulted, and that their views are taken seriously. They enjoy the joint events such as their Carnival float, and the chance to work together for the benefit of the school. Groups of parents and staff, for example, have collaborated to make story sacks that contain puppets, dolls, artefacts, and a tape and copy of the book, so that children can act out the story for themselves on another occasion.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The ways in which learning is stimulated by using the outside areas.**

27. The school has been extremely creative in making best use of the building in order to enrich the curriculum. Examples include the raised areas and balconies in the class areas, the darkened 'magic' room where children can experience different sounds and lighting effects, and the use of the former hall as a permanent soft play area. The outside playground is in two linked sections. Much of the surface is tarmac, but has been developed to extend children's physical, social and creative development with the addition of climbing equipment, a protected sand pit, a shop, house and small grassed area. The current provision is adequate but does not provide the range of facilities and opportunities needed for the full implementation of good nursery education. The school has exciting plans to develop the area further when funding permits.
28. Teachers use the outside area effectively to encourage children to climb, run, ride wheeled trikes, role play and paint as part of their physical, social and creative development. However, they do not make enough use of the opportunities for children to use the areas at times other than those specifically allocated for outdoor activities. It therefore remains unused for much of the day and does not feature at all in the overall weekly plans. In the planning meeting about going on a journey of exploration in the jungle, for example, no mention was made of the potential for using the climbing equipment or grassed area as part of the children's imaginative experience. On another occasion, a group of 28 children experimented in finding different ways of moving through space as if they were flying an aircraft. The lesson was successful, but progress was not as great as it could have been if they had moved from the in-door soft play area into the playground towards the end of the session. They did not have the advantage of a larger space for their final work nor the chance to explore the different effects on their bodies of 'flying' down and up the slope. The current provision is therefore under used, and important opportunities to use the space creatively to extend children's learning in all aspects of the curriculum are being missed.

### **The achievement of the older more able children.**

29. Teachers start their weekly planning by identifying the activities that arise from the medium term plans. These are appropriate and firmly based within the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, by starting with what the children will do, rather than a judgement of what the children know currently and what they would be expected to learn in order to reach the next 'stepping stone,' it is harder to make sure that the level of challenge is correct for different ages or groups of children. Some four year old children remain in the school until the term following their fifth birthday. Many, especially those with special educational needs, are working at appropriate levels, but some of the work for the more able is not sufficiently planned, structured or assessed to ensure that they make the best progress. This is particularly the case in the planning for the daily session at eleven o'clock when younger children have gone home and the older children are taught in groups. These sessions do not give the more able children enough structured opportunities to tackle challenging work at the early stages of literacy and numeracy within a carefully planned and assessed programme for improvement. The shortfall appears most in the development of early literacy skills, especially in writing.

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

30. The headteacher, governing body and staff should continue to work closely together to raise the quality of provision even higher by:
- i extending the outdoor curriculum into all areas of the school's work and looking for ways to improve the existing outdoor facilities;
  - ii raising the levels of achievement of the older, more able children.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	11
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	18	55	18	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	75
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	n/a
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	n/a

***Teachers and classes***

**Qualified teachers and support staff:**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	21
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	289,596
Total expenditure	273,250
Expenditure per pupil	N/A
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	16,346

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

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	69
Number of questionnaires returned	30

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	13	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	40	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	10	19	5	24
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	27	7	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	17	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	50	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	73	23	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	87	13	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	27	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	18	5	0	14

The inspection team agreed with the parents' very positive views of the school. The amount of homework is appropriate. The school is very active in making sure that parents are kept fully informed. There is daily contact with most parents, and those who do not collect or bring their children to school themselves are contacted by telephone at least once a week. It is not unusual in nursery schools for there to be a limited range of activities for children to do outside their lessons.