

INSPECTION REPORT

GARRETTS GREEN NURSERY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103122

Headteacher: Ms Fran Munby

Reporting inspector: Mrs Julie Moore
8710

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th May 2001

Inspection number: 198466

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	117 Garretts Green Lane Sheldon Birmingham
Postcode:	B26 2JL
Telephone number:	0121 743 2284
Fax number:	0121 742 7547
Appropriate authority:	Local education Authority
Name of LEA responsible officer:	Mrs Margaret Fletcher
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8710	Julie Moore	Registered inspector	Mathematical development Physical development Creative development	Characteristics of the school Standards, the school's results and children's achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management What should the school do to improve further
9479	Christine Field	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
18709	Nina Bee	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	Curricular opportunities

The inspection contractor was:

Schools Inspection Unit
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Garretts Green Nursery School is situated in a largely residential suburb in East Birmingham. The housing in the area is a mixture of privately owned and rented houses and medium-rise flats. There are 95 part-time children who attend the nursery, and they are aged from three to four. Forty-eight children attend the morning session and there are 47 in the afternoon. There is a broadly even number of boys and girls. Six per cent of them have Indian heritage, two per cent have Pakistani, and there are 14 percent of children from other national backgrounds than English. Four children have English as an additional language, but they all speak fluent English at home. Nineteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having a special educational need. When the children start school most of them are broadly average in all areas of their learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Garretts Green is a very effective school. Children make good progress so that by the time they leave they achieve above average standards in most of their learning. This is because they are well taught. Much of the teaching is of a high standard, and this means that the children learn successfully. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school is managed very well indeed.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress; most of them achieve above average standards by the time they leave Garretts Green.
- The curriculum is rich, stimulating and vibrant – encouraging children to want to learn.
- Teaching is consistently good and frequently very good.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is ably supported by all her staff.
- There is a very good partnership with parents, which has a great benefit for the children's all round development.

What could be improved

- Writing standards are not as good as they could be. Many children are capable of doing better.

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 November 1997. It was judged that the school had many strengths but there were three key issues to be tackled:

- ❑ Staff needed to have greater consistency in the way they assessed and recorded the children's attainment and progress;
- ❑ The headteacher had to devote much of her time to administrative duties and this left too little time for her to support teaching and learning;
- ❑ The outdoor surfaces and drains posed a health risk to the children.

Three and a half years later the school has made good progress in tackling these issues. There is a consistent approach to assessment and record keeping. The headteacher does not have a full-time teaching commitment; this allows her to support teaching and learning very effectively throughout the school. The drains and surfaces have been upgraded to an acceptable standard.

STANDARDS

When the children start at Garretts Green nursery most of them have average standards all round, except in speaking where attainment is below average. Good progress is made, and this means that most children achieve above average standards by the time they leave at the age of four. Many of them are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals¹ in almost all areas of learning by the end of their reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development has a high priority. Good teaching and positive relationships encourage children to work and play together, to become independent and to have a growing awareness of the needs of others. Children have good listening skills, they listen attentively and respond to questions about their book or story. Reading standards are good. Books are enjoyed, and the children listen to stories and look at pictures, eagerly identifying what the characters are doing. Many children have limited speaking skills, but they make good progress because the staff are adept at getting them to speak clearly and confidently. Writing skills are satisfactory but a significant number of pupils are capable of doing better. Attainment in speaking and writing is average, and these are the two areas where the children are on course to achieve average standards at the end of the reception year. Mathematical development is good, as are standards. Most children can recognise and count numbers to 10. Simple shapes such as a square and circle are quickly recognised.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Early science activities, such as planting seeds and finding out the conditions for growth, are enjoyed and talked about. Pupils are able to make simple plans of their walk from the library, and they make good use of the computer. The 'Mardi Gras' topic provided many opportunities for the children to assemble card, feathers, glitter and shiny materials to make masks to wear for the celebrations. Physical development is good. Children move with confidence and safety on the climbing frame. They understand the correct vocabulary such as 'below', 'on top', 'quickly', 'slowly', when talking about movements. Most are competent users of small and large equipment as well as computers. Creative development is also good. Children have a wide and varied range of creative experiences including designing and making clay models of mini-beasts, painting, drawing and music making.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic – they want to learn.
Behaviour	Very good. Pupils behave well in the classrooms and when playing outside.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work and play together well. They help and support each other.
Attendance	Good. The school encourages good attendance and punctuality through the award of certificates.

¹ The targets for five-year-olds at the end of the Foundation Stage – which is the nursery and reception classes for children aged three to five.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions seen overall	Good

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

There is much strength to the teaching, which is good overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when 94 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better, and six per cent was unsatisfactory. This time 33 per cent was very good and the remainder was good. Teachers and nursery nurses demonstrate consistently high standards in their teaching. This is why learning is so effective throughout the nursery, and the children make good progress.

Children are very well managed. They concentrate for long periods of time, they listen attentively and they behave well because of the good teaching. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. This good teaching is the result of careful planning that is based on secure assessments of what the children know, understand and can do. The development of speaking and listening skills has a high priority, as does the promotion of reading and a love of books. Children are encouraged to speak clearly; their vocabulary is extended well. Looking at books and browsing in the book areas are enjoyed. The one area where staff could do more is in the direct teaching of writing. A significant number of pupils are capable of doing better, but they are held back because they do not know how to form their letters correctly, for instance when writing their name. In mathematics, the staff use different questions according to the children's capabilities, and this moves their learning forward very well indeed. Children recognise and count numbers to 10 successfully, and there are no missed opportunities to develop an understanding of number and shapes. Staff have high expectations of what the children are capable of achieving, and the children rise to the challenges set for them. Learning is effective because staff are secure in their understanding of the best ways in which young children learn. Learning is fun. All the children are well catered for, including those children with special educational needs. Their tasks are challenging for them, and they get good support to make sure that they do not fall behind.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There are good links between the subjects. The indoor and outdoor curricula are exciting and vibrant, and this encourages the children to want to learn.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Very good. Tasks are at the right levels for the children and they make good progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils get on well with each other and they are happy to help. Most of them clearly know what is right and what is wrong, and they learn about their own and other cultures. The world is a wonderful and an exciting place for them.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good. Staff know the children very well, are responsive to their needs and they take very good care of everyone.

Parents are very welcome in the school, and there is a true partnership. The opinions of parents and their children are valued and acted upon. The curriculum invites children to learn effectively, as well as making learning fun. The updating of current curriculum policies needs to be speeded up. Children are very well cared for in a safe and secure environment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. Everyone works together successfully, and all the staff are determined that the school will do well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. A wide range of information is analysed and acted upon so that weaknesses are quickly identified and appropriate action taken.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funds are well managed and the 'best value' principles are applied when spending decisions are made.

There are no governors. Experienced officers from the Local Education Authority (LEA), who support the headteacher and her staff well, undertake the role of governors. The headteacher is very effective. She has a clear vision of the way forward, and this is shared by staff and parents alike. Staffing levels are good and the school is well resourced. The very best use is made of the indoor and outdoor accommodation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Children make good progress and their behaviour is goodThe school is approachable and it works well with parentsChildren are expected to work hard and to do their best. The school helps them to become responsibleTeaching is good and the school is well led and managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nothing significant

The inspectors agree with parents' very positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 When the children start at Garretts Green Nursery School their attainment is broadly average in most areas of their learning. It is below average in speaking. Boys and girls make good progress and they achieve well. By the time they leave the nursery, when they are four, their attainment is above average for their age group. This holds good for all areas of learning except for speaking and writing where their attainment is average. Most of the children are well on course to exceed the national targets for their age group by the end of their reception year, more than three terms ahead. Overall, standards are better than those identified at the time of the last inspection, three and a half years ago. There are more areas where attainment is above average. Children with special educational needs are very well supported. They make good progress, like their classmates. Their targets are appropriate and achievable.

2 Great emphasis is placed on the children's emotional, social and personal development. Achievement is good, and children of all capabilities make good progress – including those children with special educational needs. The children have very positive attitudes towards school and learning. This is because the whole area is one of strength, providing a firm basis, which underpins learning throughout the entire curriculum. School is enjoyed; children work and play purposefully together, and no time is wasted. Relationships are very good, and this is why the children get on so well together. They behave well, listening attentively to each other or to their teacher. All of them know the difference between what is right and what is wrong. Whether they are working or playing indoors or outdoors, the children willingly share their toys and take turns on the equipment. They are familiar with school routines, responding well to their teachers and nursery nurses. The children are good at thinking about others. For example, in one lesson a child asked to go to the toilet. As the teacher agreed to this request another child said 'And don't forget to wash your hands'.

3 From a below average starting point in speaking, and average starting points in other aspects of language and literacy, the children make good progress. Their attainment is above average in listening and reading, and average in speaking and writing. Speaking skills are weak when many children join the nursery. They make good progress, but there is still some way to go before their speaking skills are as strong as their listening or reading skills. More capable children talk confidently about the stories they have listened to, and are keen to ask questions to find out more information about the characters. Average and lower attaining children lack some of these skills, but many of them talk at length to each other and to adults when playing imaginatively and dressing up. Lower attaining children sometimes lack confidence when speaking out in their class group. Listening skills are well developed. Most children listen attentively to each other or to adults. Everyone enjoys stories, rhymes and songs. Books are also enjoyed, and the children are able to recall stories they have listened to. The more capable children can read some words and identify sounds at the beginning of words. Many of the others identify the main elements in the story, identifying with the characters. Basic literacy skills develop well but more could be done to improve the standard of the children's writing. Many children are at the early stages of writing, but many of them are capable of doing better. These children are held back because they do not know how to form their letters correctly, for instance when writing their name.

4 Mathematical development is good, with overall standards above average for the age group. All of the children achieve well. One reason for the good progress is the way in which all the staff take every opportunity to develop the children's interest in number. They count,

order and talk about numbers in the context of the day-to-day activities in the nursery. This helps all the children to have a secure numerical awareness. Many children count objects reliably up to 10 or more, and numbers are quickly recognised. 'One more than' and 'one less than' is understood well. Less capable children count to five on their own and to 10 when in their groups. Children understand what is meant by 'zero', and they use the term correctly. Most children know the names of basic shapes, and they use the correct mathematical language.

5 The children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them is above average. Good progress is made in this area of learning and children of all capabilities achieve well. Most children are competent users of the computer, and this includes those children with special educational needs. They control the mouse well, selecting their programs and working through them efficiently, wasting no time when changing from one program to another. Information and communication technology (ICT) makes a good contribution to the children's learning. Early science activities are well promoted through the environment. The children plant a range of flowers and vegetables, most of them know that the seeds need sunlight and water in order to grow. The children have a good idea about the life cycle of a butterfly, using appropriate words such as 'cocoon', 'caterpillar' and 'butterfly'. They have a secure understanding of what is meant by 'yesterday', and the children successfully develop an idea of the wider world as they learn about their immediate locality, for example where the library and the supermarket are. Construction kits are used well, and the children are competent at deciding what they are going to construct, selecting the appropriate equipment, and then improving their structure as they go along.

6 There is a strong focus on physical development, and children of all capabilities make good progress. Their achievements are good. There are many opportunities for the children to develop their manipulative skills through handling a range of tools and equipment. Outdoors, the school environment is designed to be a stimulating and exciting place. Children are adept at using the space around them, especially when they are on the climbing frame or playing in one of the imaginative areas in the school grounds. They have good control of their bodies, and they can run, jump, climb and swing, demonstrating increasing dexterity and confidence. Skills are well developed all round.

7 The children have good opportunities for creative development. All of them make good progress and they achieve well. Fantasy games are enjoyed in the imaginative play areas, and children draw, print and paint with enthusiasm. They look carefully at colour, shape and textures, trying hard to create paintings of 'beautiful butterflies with lots of colours'. Working with clay is pleasurable, and the finished models of small 'mini-beasts' show a mature awareness of fine detail. There is a good range of songs, rhymes and singing games. They enjoy playing their instruments, maintaining a slow or fast beat with their bells. Dancing is fun, and the children respond readily and quickly to different rhythms and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 Garratts Green nursery school is a happy place in which the children feel safe and secure and show absolute enjoyment in learning. The staff nurture and develop the children's social awareness to a very good level. Relationships are excellent and support positively the effective learning taking place. Parents are extremely pleased with the way the school promotes positive attitudes and values. The strengths identified in the previous inspection have been maintained.

9 Children are enthusiastic and confident learners. They show interest in their work and apply themselves for prolonged periods of time. When planting seeds in the school's lovely garden they worked diligently and were keen to draw a picture of the planting and label their

work. Most children get on well with others, are willing to share and take turns and have a secure understanding of the impact their actions have on others. When listening to the story about *The Big, Bad Fish* they showed very good empathy with the tadpole who was frightened in case the fish ate him. They were relieved and happy when the tadpole changed into a frog and jumped out of harm's way. At this point, and with positive encouragement from the nursery nurse, they were able to reflect on keeping safe.

10 The children have very high standards of behaviour. For example, during library time most chose books with a high level of independence. Occasionally, in lessons, a few shout out to gain the teacher's attention as their natural exuberance takes over from remembering nursery routines such as having to put up your hand first if you want to answer a question.

11 The school encourages a high rate of attendance and meets with a large measure of success. There are efficient systems in place for registering children that involve the children registering themselves by ticking their name on a list as they enter, and staff calling out and recording the names of those who are present. Rewards are available for those who make every effort to attend. Last year 12 awards were given out to children who attended regularly. The good attendance of many children is supporting their positive achievements during their time at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12 Teaching is good. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when 94 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better, and six per cent was unsatisfactory. This time 33 per cent was very good, and the remainder was good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

13 There are many strengths to the teaching. All the staff are very secure in their knowledge of the most effective ways that young children learn. Planning throughout the nursery is consistently good, as are the systems for observing, assessing and recording what the children know, understand and can do. This was an issue at the last inspection. Very good progress has been made in tackling this. Teachers' assessments are now informing their future plans for the children's next stages in learning. This means that tasks are pitched at the right levels for them, so that a range of different activities suitably challenge the more and less capable children. Good progress is made by all groups of pupils.

14 The good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities enables the children to have enough time to explore an activity and to follow their interests. Staff are always on hand to guide and support, making learning meaningful for the children and encouraging them to make progress. In one successful activity the children were painting. The intervention of the nursery nurse meant that the children made firmer strokes with their brush, as well as realising that a finer brush helped them to define features more clearly.

15 Teachers and nursery nurses are adept at making the best use of learning opportunities as they arise, for example, in an outdoor session when a group of children were using the open 'parachute'. The children had to keep the ball on top of the taut parachute, which they were holding. Their task was to keep the ball moving. This activity required a great deal of skill and co-ordination on the part of the children involved. The nursery nurse's sensitive support for children with special educational needs enabled them to succeed, like their classmates. Everyone had a great deal of fun during this activity, which extended all the children's social and physical skills very successfully indeed. The children were very well managed throughout, and this contributed to the success of the session. Physical skills are well developed, both at school and at home. Parents are especially pleased about the 'Top Start' project. They enjoy helping their children to improve their physical skills such as jumping, playing short tennis and hockey. This has a positive impact on standards.

16 Basic skills are generally well taught, with strong emphasis on speaking and listening. Language development is seen as the key to all learning, and as such is given a high priority. Questions are carefully structured for individual children, such as, 'Daniel what can we do to make this harder?', 'What happens if we change the shape of the plasticine?' – to a group of children exploring which objects sink and which float. This type of activity promotes and extends thinking, as well as developing understanding. Books are enjoyed and a love of books and reading is developed successfully at every level. 'Book bags' successfully encourage the children to choose a book to 'read' at home regularly. Letter sounds and names are taught well through games, songs and stories. The more capable children quickly recognise rhyming words and the sounds at the beginning of words. One area where staff could do more is in the teaching of writing. Standards are at the level they should be for the age group but they could be better. There is not enough direct teaching to develop the children's writing skills, and they do not have enough opportunities to draw lines and circles, or to trace over lines and patterns accurately. Many of the more capable children are ready to write their name. This has not been identified, and the children have not been given enough guidance about how to do this successfully. This is holding back their ability to write.

17 Every opportunity is taken to include number work in all aspects of work in the nursery. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The strong focus on the development and extension of mathematical language, as well as counting and ordering numbers, means that the children enjoy their number work, making good progress. One session on 'tallying', successfully linked with the 'mini-beast' project. The session began with the nursery nurse introducing the idea of counting quickly by using an earlier traffic count. She used a large chart to demonstrate tallying, with the children helping. Once she was sure that all the group understood, the children went into the school grounds to count mini-beasts and tally their findings. The nursery nurse's specific questions, such as 'How many have we seen?', 'Can you add up the total?', successfully reinforced the children's understanding of their new learning.

18 Very good teaching promotes the children's social development, behaviour and relationships successfully. The well-established routines enable all the children to settle in quickly when they start school. Without exception, all the children are encouraged to behave considerately, to work hard and to try their best. They work and play co-operatively together because their personal and social skills are well promoted. One very successful activity, based on using the parachute, encouraged the children to say 'Hello' to their friends, take turns running under the parachute, and work in pairs and as a group. Their teacher and nursery nurse were very good role models, instilling confidence and engendering enthusiasm and excitement. The staff have very high expectations about behaviour and the children respond positively. In almost every lesson the children sustained their concentration for long periods of time, working hard until their tasks were completed to their satisfaction.

19 Nursery nurses make a significant contribution to the good teaching in the school. They work with groups or individuals, participating in planning, assessing and recording the children's attainment and progress. All the adults work closely as a team; activities are well prepared and the children's progress is accurately monitored. This enables the staff to have instant information about where children need support for their learning, or where they need extending.

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

20 The indoor and outdoor curriculum provided for the children in the nursery is very good. It is rich, stimulating and vibrant and very well balanced. The nursery provides a very good range of worthwhile opportunities within the curriculum. Lessons are well planned according to the recommended areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, and all activities are well matched to the children's ages. Clear policies and schemes of work for all subjects enable teachers to plan work effectively. The school has correctly identified the need to review most of its curriculum policies to bring them in line with current requirements. This work is about half way through. However, the medium-term plans, developed by the staff, are detailed documents that are firmly based on the Early Learning Goals and these are fully up to date.

21 A very good feature of teachers' planning is the way in which planned work links the different curricular areas together. This approach successfully makes children aware of connections between the different areas of learning. For example, in one class when the children were singing a song about a caterpillar a little boy said 'We know that caterpillars change into beautiful butterflies'. The adult taking the lesson took the opportunity to briefly recall how the caterpillar changes into a butterfly. The nursery provides a very good range of activities, which enhance children's learning. Children have the opportunity to take part in musical activities, such as learning to play the violin. An experienced nursery nurse comes in for one day each week to develop music skills and promote activities which involve improving the outdoor environment. Theatre groups and storytellers are invited into school regularly. These events are exciting, for example recently Conk the Clown transformed into a clown in front of the children during a visit. Displayed around the nursery are beautiful watercolour pictures, which were painted by the children when a visiting artist worked with them over a period of time. These activities are open to all children and make a valuable contribution to extending their learning and experiences in all areas of learning. Children have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to a farm, which enables them to learn how to look after and care for animals successfully.

22 The curriculum provides full equality of opportunity and access in order for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. This very high standard has been maintained since the last inspection. Great care is taken to ensure that all the children, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity or ability, can access the entire curriculum successfully at the right level for them.

23 The teachers have worked hard to develop good strategies for the teaching of numeracy. In particular, they have developed the idea of using number fans to promote learning successfully. The children have many opportunities to talk about what they are finding out. This results in most of them confidently working with numbers. Strategies for the teaching of literacy are sound. Speaking and listening skills and the teaching of early reading skills and a love for books are well promoted. The one aspect where staff could do more is in the direct teaching of writing. Many children are capable of doing more but they are held back because they do not know how to form their letters correctly. There are many opportunities for children to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills as they use the computers.

24 Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. This area of learning is well promoted in everything the children do. The importance of a healthy lifestyle is discussed regularly during snack-times. A good example was seen as the children drank their milk and talked about why milk was good for them. Parents and children are invited to talk to staff in the Life Education Caravan, which visits annually and promotes a healthy lifestyle for all.

25 The provision for children with special education needs is very good. All the requirements of the Code of Practice² are met fully. Identification and assessment procedures are very good. Children causing concern are highlighted early and useful, informative records are kept on each child. Individual education plans have clear targets and these plans are reviewed regularly.

26 There are good links between the nursery and the local infant and secondary schools. Students from the secondary school play and make musical instruments with the children, and there are regular visits to and from the infant schools. The school is well supported by the local education authority's educational psychology service whose staff provide advice on individual pupils.

27 Very good community links have been established. A local business has given support to the nursery in developing their grounds, and parents have helped to create a nature trail. This has resulted in the nursery receiving an award for 'outstanding environmental enhancement'. The local area is used very well, enabling the children to gain an understanding of familiar places and the routes they take. The children visit the local supermarket and library. These planned visits, alongside visitors such as the dentist and the orthoptist, enrich the curriculum in all areas. The school has maintained this high standard since the previous inspection.

28 The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. It is good for cultural development. This high standard has been maintained since the last inspection and continues to be strength of the school. Provision for spiritual education pervades the many activities in which the children take part. The outdoor area and the school grounds celebrate God's wonderful world through original works of art. Imaginative areas are situated in exciting places so that the children are stimulated into wanting to create magical experiences. Displays are simple, attractive and 'child friendly' and all children have many opportunities to sit, listen and look at the wonders around them. Many examples were seen where the children looked, listened and learnt in amazement. For example as they listen attentively to stories such as *The Big Bad Fish*, many are able to describe how the tadpole felt when the big bad fish arrived. They say 'He might want his mummy because he is scared'. In activities when they plant seeds and during outdoor play sessions they are amazed as they discover life in the form of mini-beasts.

29 Provision for moral development is very good. Children are expected to behave well and quickly learn the difference between right and wrong. This is because adults constantly reinforce thoughtful and good behaviour and all consistently follow the behaviour policy, which is firmly established in the nursery. As they get older the children begin to show higher levels of respect to adults and visitors in the school and towards each other. They know how to share equipment and the importance of taking turns. They are inquisitive and confident and the more articulate children politely ask questions for example 'Why are you doing all that writing?' and 'Could you write my name for me please?' All adults, who work in the school, provide good role models for the children to follow throughout the school day.

² The procedures that have to be followed for children with special educational needs

30 Very good provision is made for social development. Most children demonstrate good listening skills in lessons and listen well when others speak during class discussions because listening skills are developed well throughout the nursery. This makes these sessions enjoyable and very good social occasions. Good examples were seen at the end of sessions when the children were encouraged to discuss what they had learnt and during snack-time when children were told the reasons why it was important to eat healthily and to drink milk. They are many opportunities for children to work together in lessons. For example children confidently and maturely work in pairs as they develop their computing skills. They generally relate very well towards each other when they work together in groups.

31 The provision for cultural development is good. Through links with the community, educational visits and visitors invited into school, the children begin to understand their own and other cultural traditions. The nursery highlights a festival each term, which promotes cultural development well. Last term they focussed on Mardi Gras. The children made musical instruments and masks and celebrated by dressing up and having a carnival and a procession through the school grounds. Cultural development is promoted well in art and music activities and through the stories the children listen to. Recently an artist came into the nursery and worked with all children, which resulted in them all developing successfully their own watercolour picture. Prints of pictures by famous artists for example, *The Irises* painted by Vincent Van Gogh are displayed around the nursery for children to look at and comment on. Laughter is heard constantly in the nursery and all of the children are happy in everything they do. To them the world appears to be a wonderful place.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32 When the school was previously inspected it was reported that children's health, welfare and safety were well provided for; this is still the case today. Staff know the children very well and are responsive to needs. The school has very effective induction processes that help children to settle well. Very good links with a range of social, medical and educational support agencies are in place and these are beneficial to supporting the children's development. Quite a few children have speech and language support to help overcome problems. The school has good links with external agents and uses them when necessary to support children with special educational needs. Good documentation is kept on all children that clearly shows the progress they are making.

33 The school is vigilant in the way it makes sure that all adults who work with the children know about allergies and dietary requirements. There is good attention paid to first aid. A health and safety policy is fully implemented with risks being assessed regularly and meticulously logged. The arrangements for child protection meet requirements. Good attention is paid to ensuring the children understand about personal, social and health matters and the annual visit of 'Harold and the Life Education Caravan' supports the school's work well. A report on each child's achievements in the six areas of learning as set out in the Early Learning Goals is provided for parents at the end of the year. This is a positive feature in the school-home links that the parents find very useful. Very good systems for encouraging attendance mean that parents are keen that their child is punctual and attends school regularly. Behaviour is very good, and parents feel that any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively.

34 Weaknesses identified in the school's approaches to observing, recording and assessing children at work and play have been tackled effectively. The systems in place to assess children's progress provide useful information that teachers refer to regularly when planning activities. There is a comprehensive profile maintained on each child that begins with parents completing a 'My child at home' booklet. This is added to effectively by the

outcomes of the child's first assessment and the assessments made by the staff. A comprehensive 'picture' emerges of the children's strengths and areas where they need extra support. The one area where more could be done is in children's writing. This needs to be assessed more frequently, and suitable tasks provided, so that their writing skills are extended appropriately.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35 When the school was previously inspected the positive links with parents made a very good contribution to their children's progress. This remains the case today. Visitors find the school welcoming and friendly and first impressions are entirely positive. Parents are very supportive of the school and most play a key role as co-educators with the school. The school communicates with parents through a variety of means, including regular newsletters that are informative and written in an accessible and lively style. Parents give freely of their time to work as class helpers, develop mathematics and science trails in the school grounds, take part in workshops on topics, such as behaviour management, and make sure that homework is done.

36 Parents are fully involved at every stage when children are identified as having special educational needs. They take part in their child's reviews, making valuable contributions to the process. Parents commented about the high quality of the school's work for its special needs children, inspectors support this view.

37 The school canvasses parents' opinions annually about the quality of education being provided. Parents are very pleased with the very high level of social awareness that children gain during their time at school. The school is keen to listen to parents' views and every week the headteacher has a "drop-in" session for anyone who wants to see her. Staff make themselves available at the start and close of sessions so that information can be passed on. There is a natural and easy level of communication at these times.

38 Parents have plenty of opportunities to come into school. Coffee mornings are held in the community room and each year there are 'Christmas get-togethers'. Every year, parents involved in the 'Core Skills' workshops come into school to share books with their children and to celebrate *PB Bear and the Birthday Party*. Another annual event is the residential visit to Dodford farm. Parents, staff, and 15 children go to appreciate 'a week of space and fresh air'.

39 The strong links with parents support the children's 'all round' development very positively indeed. This gives them a very good start to their education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40 The headteacher provides excellent leadership; an improvement on the very good leadership observed the last time that the school was inspected. She has a very secure understanding about the most effective ways that young children learn, and her vision and knowledge inform all aspects of the work at Garretts Green Nursery School. Everyone connected with the school works together very well – with the best possible benefits for all of the children.

41 The strongest emphasis is placed on the all-round development of each individual child; and this is one of the reasons that the children make good progress in their learning. This is brought about by the caring and positive ethos, in which every child and his or her family is valued and recognised. Parents are very positive about the school, the headteacher and the staff. They feel that their opinions are listened to and acted upon effectively, and they rightly feel that this is a very good school – “The best there is”. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity, making very sure that all the pupils, including the most and least capable, achieve the highest standards they can reach in every aspect of school life. Another reason why the children achieve well.

42 The school’s plans are detailed and thorough, and there are very good systems for monitoring and evaluating its work. Everything is broken down into small stages, with the cost, time-scales and the staff involved. The strong focus on standards, teaching and learning, as well as a rigorous approach to the continued improvements of the quality of the children’s education, mean that the school moves forward confidently. The current headteacher is leaving the school very soon. With this in mind, the school’s most recent development plan is flexible enough to accommodate new initiatives, whilst at the same time providing a framework for future improvements. Policy documents are being revised on a rolling programme, and this needs speeding up so that they are all up-to-date.

43 Progress since the last inspection has been good. All of the issues have been well tackled. There is now a much greater consistency in the ways that the school assesses, observes and records the attainment and progress of the children. The school grounds and drains are no longer a risk, and the headteacher now has sufficient time to support learning and teaching effectively. She has additional clerical support to assist with the administrative duties, and she no longer has a full-time class teaching commitment. This has had a positive effect on the children’s achievements, as can be seen in the improvements in teaching and standards since the last inspection.

44 The school is well organised and managed on a day-to-day basis. Secure routines ensure that things run smoothly. There are sufficient staff to meet all requirements. One positive effect of the school managing most of its own budget means that extra staff have been appointed to support children with special educational needs, and to work with small groups on a number of environmental projects in the school grounds. Both these initiatives are successful in improving standards as well as providing a rich and varied curriculum for all the children. A number of students, as well as other volunteers, work in the school. They are successfully assimilated into the day-to-day work of the school, and there are very good systems for their training and induction. This helps them to be an effective support to promote the children’s learning. There are no requirements for the performance management of nursery teachers, but the school is well placed to begin this process when it starts next year.

45 There are no governors as such, but experienced officers from the local education authority effectively support the head, the administrator and the staff. These arrangements work very well at present. Rigorous systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school, and this enables priorities to be decided, plans drawn up, and the budget to be set.

46 Funds are well managed and controlled and 'best value' principles are applied to all spending decisions. The school does not have a fully delegated budget; the local authority retains control of some of the staffing budget. By judicious planning and management the head and her team, with the support of their centrally funded finance officer, control the funds efficiently and effectively. The benefits of the additional staffing have already been mentioned earlier in this report. The planned carry forward, which is high, is to maintain the current staffing levels, as well as to continue to improve the school's indoor and outdoor facilities. Extra funds have been put aside to pay for the school's new library. These initiatives have already demonstrated their success in improving standards and the quality of education that the school provides. The best use is made of information technology to support the school's work.

47 Extra funds, obtained through a range of grants, are used suitably to promote and extend learning. Successful bids support a range of initiatives involving core skills training for parents, additional computer training for the staff, involvement in the Suzuki violin teaching project and various projects linked to improving the school grounds and buildings. Funds for special educational needs are used appropriately, and the children make good progress – like their classmates.

48 The school is well resourced, with a good range of high quality equipment, books and computers. The best use is made of the accommodation, which is limited. However, for a building that was built in the 1940s to last for 10 years, the school is in remarkably good condition. The outdoor areas are of high quality, with strong emphasis placed on the creative, imaginative and physical development of the children. A range of work by practising artists and craftspeople, imaginative areas for play and quiet contemplation, attractive shrubs and gardens, all combine to make the school an aesthetically pleasing place to be.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49 This already successful school has few areas for development. To improve standards even further the headteacher and staff should:

(1) Improve standards in the children's written work by:-

- ❑ providing more opportunities for the children to draw lines and circles, to trace over lines and patterns and to practise letter shapes as they paint, draw and record;
- ❑ showing the more capable children how to write their name correctly;
- ❑ assessing writing more frequently so that progress can improve.

See paragraphs 3, 16, 23, 34, 60

In addition the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the post-inspection plan:

- ❑ Speed up the process for updating the curriculum documents.

See paragraphs 20, 42

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	33	67	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

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)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	40980
Total expenditure	40297
Expenditure per pupil	848
Balance brought forward from previous year	9054
Balance carried forward to next year	9737

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	95
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	12	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	21	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	25	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	40	2	0	0
The teaching is good.	87	12	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	19	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	77	23	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	43	17	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	27	4	0	6

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

50 This area is promoted very well in everything the children take part in, which results in their good progress. By the time they leave the nursery most of the children are likely to exceed the expected levels for children of this age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

51 The children show positive attitudes to learning, develop good listening skills and enjoy coming to school. This is a result of the interesting activities that are set out for them to take part in each day. At the beginning of the sessions the children select their name and stick it on the register board so that everyone knows they are in school. They do this quickly and efficiently so that they can get straight on with their first tasks. The purposeful atmosphere, and the very good relationships, ensures that the children are confident in what they are doing – either on their own or in a small group. Their independence is encouraged successfully. A good example was seen during a mathematical activity. The children worked independently as they recorded what they saw in the garden that related to numbers. All used clipboards expertly. Activities were selected with confidence, and the children tidied away smartly at the end of the session.

52 All the adults have high expectations regarding the development of the children's personal independence and ability to manage their own personal hygiene. The importance of eating sensibly and drinking milk is discussed regularly during snack-times, and all adults are good role models promoting the children's personal and social skills well. Most of the children, except the very youngest, can dress and undress themselves with very little help from adults. They quickly get ready to go out to play, or to use the outdoor equipment, fastening their coats and making sure that they are properly dressed. Children are good at helping each other to get dressed and undressed. They wait in a quiet and orderly line for the door to be opened so that they can go outdoors.

53 All the children are encouraged to respect the feeling of others, in particular when others are speaking. In small group time the children waited patiently for a child who needed time to speak, putting forward her ideas about how to roll the clay so that it made a thin line. The children knew that their friend needed time to collect her thoughts, and they understood that it took longer for her to speak in a sentence, so they waited. A group, who were playing outside with the parachute, were able to lift the parachute off the ground, follow simple instructions and change places with their partner. They worked co-operatively together all the time and were aware of what needed doing if they were to run successfully under the parachute. All the time the children were developing very good relationships with the adults who work with them, as well as with each other.

54 Behaviour is very good. This is due to the high expectations of all adults regarding what is acceptable behaviour in the nursery, and the constant promotion of the importance of being aware of the needs of others. Children learn to control their feelings, and adults are always on hand to give extra support when necessary. Parents spoke very highly about the way that the school tackles behaviour. Without exception, parents feel that the school really does succeed in promoting acceptable behaviour. Inspectors agree with this.

55 Teaching is consistently good, and frequently very good. This is because the staff know their children well, and they keep accurate records and assessments of the children's

progress. All the staff work together very well, there is constant liaison between them during the working day as well as at the more formal weekly meetings. This whole area is very well planned, and it underpins every aspect of the day-to-day life in the nursery. This why it is successful, resulting in children that have a strong sense of their own worth, as well as having a positive self-image.

Communication, language and literacy

56 The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is good overall. It is often very good. By the end of their time in the nursery most children will reach the levels expected for their ages. Similar levels of attainment were reported in the previous report but there has been an improvement in the standards the children reach in particular elements of this area of learning. Most children will exceed the expected levels in the development of listening skills and reading because high emphasis is based on the importance of listening carefully at all times, on the teaching of early reading skills and the love of books. This has a positive impact on the levels of attainment the children reach.

57 Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress because learning is good and sometimes very good. This is because activities are interesting and well thought out. The adults are very aware of the different ability groups in their classes and tasks are suitably matched to the needs of all children. The systems for assessing the children's attainment and progress are in place, and are used by all staff effectively. All sessions are well resourced and the children use these resources confidently.

58 Speaking skills are well promoted. However a significant number of children have been identified as having difficulties acquiring basic speech and language skills. They receive good quality support outside the classroom to develop their confidence when speaking. A few of these children regularly visit the speech therapist. Most children use a reasonable range of vocabulary. More capable children talk confidently about the stories they have previously heard and ask questions confidently to gain information. For example, during a story session a teacher had two books with her and one child said 'Are you going to read *Nine Ducks* *Nine* to us again?' A few children are reluctant speakers but speaking skills are well promoted by the adults who involve children of all capabilities as they skilfully question the children during activities. Listening skills are very well promoted. All adults have high expectations about speaking clearly, listening accurately and showing an awareness of the listener. 'Please' and 'thank you' are encouraged at all times and the children are discouraged from interrupting when others are trying to speak. Visitors invited into the nursery such as the puppet theatre, enhance this aspect of this area of learning successfully.

59 All children in both classes enjoy listening to stories and like looking at books. Many were observed selecting books and attempting to read them. Most understand their purpose and handle them carefully. A few higher attaining children begin to recognise some initial sounds. For example, letters in their names, some familiar words and the title of the books they read. A few children, who have difficulty articulating words, confidently have-a-go at explaining in a limited way what is happening, by looking carefully at the pictures. All adults interact well with the children and encourage them to clarify their thinking and develop their ideas. Most begin to understand the main elements in a story. They identify the characters enthusiastically and many have a sound idea of sequencing simple stories correctly. The children answer questions confidently, relating to the stories they hear. A few identify how the characters feel, for example whether they are happy or sad and why this is. All children visit the local library and take books home to read, successfully developing a love of books and literature.

60 The children attempt to write their names using pencil and crayons. They record their

ideas and experiences through drawing and writing. Most children are at the beginning stages of early writing. Staff encourage them to write down their ideas and thoughts, and many can do this confidently. However, although the writing skills the children develop are satisfactory, a significant number of children are capable of doing better. These children are held back because they do not know how to form the letters correctly. For instance, when they attempt to write their name. There are too few opportunities for children to develop their basic hand-eye co-ordination skills when writing, for example tracing over patterns. Writing areas in both classrooms encourage the children to write for various purposes such as writing party invitations, recipes for pancakes, letters to Father Christmas and shopping lists. Only a few children are beginning to form recognisable letters when they write, but many are capable of doing this if they have more appropriate support. The children's progress is not assessed regularly enough, and they are moving on quickly at this stage in the term. All children have the opportunity to borrow games regularly, which successfully promote their skills that have been developed in their lessons.

Mathematical development

61 Children make good progress because the teaching is good, and frequently very good. Many of them are on course to exceed the levels expected for their age group. When the children start in the nursery their standards are around average, by the time they leave they reach above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Every opportunity is taken to include number work in all areas in the nursery, both indoors and outdoors. No opportunities are missed, so the children always expect to talk about numbers, and count and order numbers, whatever they are doing. Teachers, nursery nurses and parents make learning fun. They always make the best use of mathematical language such as 'more', 'less', 'heavier', 'lighter', 'big', 'little'. All of these activities mean that the children understand numbers fully, and they are very familiar with using numbers in a range of different situations. Standards have improved for everyone.

62 In one outdoor session the children eagerly counted the spots on the large toadstools. Many children count to 10 or more accurately, with one more capable child counting the spots and recognising the number 14 on the playground surface. The numbers on the buses passing by the nursery were noticed and read, and the children were given chalk to write their own numbers – which they did successfully. Less capable children are secure when counting to five or ten in a group, most of them count reliably to five on their own.

63 Number songs and rhymes are enjoyed, and sung or said with great gusto. Everyone had fun singing *Five little speckled frogs*, as well as joining in the actions. The children use the correct vocabulary; they know 'one more than, one less than' and can explain this when using their building blocks. They have been taught the term 'zero' and they use it correctly, for example when they were using the number dragon. When this happened their teacher made good use of 'number before' and 'number after' to successfully reinforce their understanding of zero.

64 Well-planned activities using clay, play dough, sand and water help the children to compare quantities effectively. The staff are adept at developing the correct mathematical language, and no opportunities are missed to compare and contrast containers of different sizes and shapes. Most children know the names of basic shapes. As part of their everyday discussions they talk about the shape of the seed trays, the square and rectangular gardens, and the shape of their seeds – circles. When looking at books they correctly identify square, circle and triangle, and the more capable pupils know how many corners a triangle has.

65 Well-structured observations and assessments of what the children know, understand and can do, mean that the staff are secure when they plan the next stages in the

children's work. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Progress is checked out at regular intervals, so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make consistently good or better progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66 The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes it is very good. Most children make good progress in this area of learning and they are on course to reach standards higher than expected for their ages. This is due to the consistently high teaching and the good cross-curricular links, which continually reinforce previous learning. Adults take advantage of every opportunity to promote understanding in this area of learning as they interact with the children during indoor and outdoor sessions. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in some strands within this area, namely information and communication technology.

67 The children show a secure understanding of past and present as they talk about what they did 'yesterday'. Many of them speak confidently about a plan on the classroom wall, which shows their route to the local library and back to school. More capable children can identify the roads and shops they passed on their journey, describing the visit in detail. Activities such as this successfully develop and extend the children's understanding of the wider world. Over time, the children are observing the life cycle of the frog. They are recognising the changes that are taking place in their tadpoles. For instance, 'It is growing little legs and then it grows into a big frog'.

68 There are many opportunities for the children to develop a good understanding of features of living things. All look with fascination and show good concentration as they identify and observe the movements of mini-beasts, which they find. The children learn about their senses and about how important it is to listen and look carefully. Many are confident and ask questions about why things happen and how things work. They are keen to recall concepts they have been previously taught, such what happens to tadpoles as they grow. Most have a good idea of the life cycle of a butterfly and begin to use appropriate vocabulary when discussing it such as 'cocoon' and 'caterpillar' and 'beautiful butterfly'. Working in small groups, the children have been planting vegetables in their small gardens. They talk about the size and shape of the seeds, as well as planting them correctly, and they are familiar with the names, colours and shapes of the fully-grown vegetables. Sensitive input from the nursery nurses encourages the children to observe and investigate living things, successfully extending their understanding very well indeed.

69 The children work with construction materials during their 'choice' time. Many of them are adept at planning their constructions and then changing them to fit in with revised ideas. The masks made for the 'Mardi Gras' project are good examples of different designs using card, paper, feathers, and a range of media to create exciting models. Manipulative skills are good, and the children work collaboratively together. Computer skills are good. All the children, including those with special educational needs, are confident users. They can access their programs unaided, and they have good control of the mouse, using the keyboard well. Children mostly work in pairs, helping and supporting each other and waiting patiently for their turn. Teachers and nursery nurses give effective support, extending children's skills by demonstrating what is needed to take learning on to the next stage.

70 Knowledge and understanding of the world is well promoted. Staff always encourage the children to use the correct vocabulary, and the children's interest is stimulated by the exciting and challenging activities that are prepared for them. This helps the children to develop a range of skills, which provide a firm base for current and future learning. Planning is very good, with a balanced set of tasks that are well matched to the children's levels. On-

going assessments mean that there is up-to-date knowledge of what the children know, understand and can do. This information informs the teachers' future plans very well indeed.

Physical development

71 Physical development is well promoted and taught, and the children make good progress all round. Most are on course to exceed the levels expected for their age group. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Great efforts by staff and parents have created an outdoor environment that is stimulating and exciting for the children, with many opportunities for their planned and unplanned physical development. Problems with the outdoor surfaces and drains, referred to in the last report, have been dealt with satisfactorily.

72 Most children are adept at using space well when they are playing outside on the climbing frames, exploring the adventure playground or playing in one of the imaginative areas. They have good control of their bodies, and they can climb, swing, run and jump demonstrating increasing dexterity and confidence. Indoor opportunities for physical development are equally challenging; the children handle tools and equipment with dexterity. When using computers most can manipulate a mouse, move the cursor and use the keyboard very well indeed.

73 The staff interact positively with the children, encouraging them to gain in confidence. Adults giving good demonstrations improve the children's skills. For example, jumping with two feet together, or showing the children how to hold the hockey stick so that the ball travels further when it is hit. Ball skills are good, with the children persevering for long periods to improve their hitting, throwing and catching skills. The 'Top Start' project is having a good impact on increasing children's physical skills as well as actively involving their parents. Parents are very supportive of this project and many of them spoke with great enthusiasm about the benefits for their children.

74 Good use is made of the soft play area, with well-planned activities linked to earlier movement sessions. Children keep close to the ground, moving quickly and slowly on different parts of their bodies with good control. In one of the sessions the children worked really hard, and increased their pulse rate, which enabled the teacher to draw everyone's attention to the effects of exercise on their bodies. This increased the children's awareness and understanding successfully. Children with special educational needs always receive extra support from adults, encouraging them to 'have a go' and giving them the help they need so that their confidence increases.

75 Regular indoor and outdoor activities are planned effectively at the right levels. This means that the children's co-ordination improves as well as their skills and dexterity. A good example was a dance session. All the activities were planned so that the children worked individually, in pairs and in a larger group. Their confidence in using the space around them was apparent when the lively music started and they began to dance. Good systems for assessing progress help the activities to be planned appropriately.

Creative development

76 This area of learning is well taught. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress because of the good teaching, and most of them are on course to exceed the expectations for the age group. The good standards reached at the last inspection have been maintained. The wide range of stimulating and exciting experiences provided by the staff extend and develop the children's creative skills very well indeed. These include singing, making music, painting, printing, and working with clay and a variety of other media in two and three dimensions.

77 The many opportunities for imaginative play are fun. A group of children playing outside enjoyed being the 'little' caterpillars crawling through the 'jungle' in their willow arch, and 'big' dragons in their fantasy area which already has its own very large carved dragon. Very little adult intervention took place, and none was needed, because the children were totally immersed in their fantasy games extending their imagination and sharing ideas successfully.

78 Children draw, print and paint with enthusiasm, selecting their colours with care. Good teaching input about the correct way to hold their brush, and the use of brushes of different widths, improved the standard and the quality of the children's work. More capable children have good control of their tools, producing lively pictures. Other children are still at the stage of making marks on a surface, but this is enjoyed and they concentrate hard when painting.

79 Some interesting models were produced when the children worked with clay. Most of the group selected the equipment they needed; organising themselves well, and deciding with their teacher what they were going to create. The class topic on 'mini-beasts' was a popular choice, and some children found pictures of caterpillars and butterflies to base their work on. Others decided to make their own models, some using their imagination, others referring to the various pictures around the room. Skills were developed successfully through the teacher's intervention, such as when she showed the children how to use their fingers to roll the clay more finely. The teacher's accurate observations of how well the children were tackling their task enabled her to judge their progress in social development as well as in creative development.

80 Music is well taught, and the children are developing a good repertoire of songs and rhymes. They sing *Five little speckled frogs* with great enthusiasm, keeping in time with the beat as well as doing the actions. Most children understand the difference between loud and soft, fast and slow, and this was aptly demonstrated when they were playing different bells and maintaining the beat successfully. They enjoy dancing, responding well to different rhythms and music. The school's participation in the Suzuki violin teaching project successfully extends the children's knowledge and understanding of string instruments.