

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HAMPDEN WAY NURSERY SCHOOL**

Southgate

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101252

Headteacher: Allyson Pascoe

Reporting inspector: John G F Parsons  
22546

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 198513

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:	3-5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hampden Way Southgate London
Postcode:	N14 5DJ
Telephone number:	020 8368 2131
Fax number:	020 8361 6818
Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Barnet
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Remo Ferrari
Date of previous inspection:	10 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22546	John G F Parsons	Registered inspector	Under-fives	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9499	Phiroze Daruwala	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
28125	Pauline France	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23292	Eileen Evans	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hampden Way is a nursery school for 83 boys and girls aged between three and five, the majority of whom attend part-time. Based on family needs, 28 children attend for a mixture of full and part-time education each week and have lunch at the school, none is eligible for free school meals. There are 18 children from minority ethnic groups and 35 children from European or other origins. Of these almost a quarter have English as an additional language but only a small proportion are at the early stages of language development. The main languages spoken by these children at home are Gujerati, Turkish, Arabic and Tamil. There are very few pupils with special educational needs and none with statements. Achievement on entry is broadly in line with that expected for the children's age and includes children who are very able. The inspection of the school included a detailed inspection of those children who have English as an additional language.

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

This is a good school. Children achieve good standards and progress well. Teaching is generally good and frequently very good. The school provides a very high level of care and ensures children develop well. It makes good use of the small budget delegated to the school's control, to provide a rich range of learning opportunities. This together with the very good leadership and management of the school ensures the school offers good value for money.

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

- Standards of achievement and behaviour are good overall.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and frequently very good.
- The school has been effective at introducing the Foundation Stage.\*
- Children have very good attitudes and enjoy coming to school.
- Children are keen to learn and take responsibility for their own actions. Relationships between adults and children are very good and the school has strong links with parents.
- The school has developed good systems of record keeping and tracking children's progress.

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

- The knowledge of and confidence in information and communication technology (ICT) of staff is inconsistent and the quality and range of ICT equipment inadequate.
- There should be greater adult intervention during child-initiated activities to ensure boys and girls integrate in all the activities provided.
- Individual assessment of children is not sufficiently evaluative and as a result planning does not consistently link to the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

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

\*Foundation Stage is the designated curriculum for children in nursery and reception classes and the six areas of learning called early learning goals are broken down into stepping stones.

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

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in November 1997. It has improved the quality of education it provides. The introduction of the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning has sharpened procedures. The school has successfully addressed the key issues of the last inspection. Children's language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development have improved significantly. The school now makes suitable provision for those children who are high achievers. The strengths identified in the previous report remain.

## STANDARDS

The school offers a caring and safe environment for children. This translates into a nurturing situation that ensures that children's personal, social and emotional needs are met and they develop well. Many children are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals\* by the time they complete their nursery education, especially those who have been in the school for five or six terms. Children achieve well in the early learning goals of communication, language and literacy, physical development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and personal, social and emotional development as most are well advanced along the stepping stones by the time they leave the nursery. In mathematical development children achieve standards that are expected for their age.

Children who are new to English benefit from the very practical exploratory approach that is well supported by the staff. They make good progress and move well through the stepping stones of communications language and literacy.

The visits made by teachers to children's homes prior to their entry to school make for a smooth transition to nursery education. This thorough and thoughtful induction ensures that children feel secure and confident to explore and learn. This leads to good progress particularly in personal, social and emotional development.

The majority of children start school with average skills and achieve well by the end of their time at Hampden Way Nursery. Those children who have special educational needs progress well including those who have above average ability, particularly when they receive extra adult support.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: children are eager to come to school and quickly become involved in activities
Behaviour	Good: children work well together and are responsive and polite to adults
Personal development and relationships	Very good: this is a strength. Children quickly become confident and independent and are keen to explore their surroundings. They establish very good relationships with all adults and are good at working together
Attendance	Good: children are keen to come to school and attendance is good even though it is not compulsory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions seen overall	Good

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

Teaching by all members of staff, teachers, nursery nurses, and support staff, is of a good quality. During the inspection 42 per cent of the teaching was very good, 88 per cent was good or better and it was never less than satisfactory. As a result children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities, well matched to their developmental needs, which leads them to have positive attitudes to school and to make good progress. Adults in the nursery pay close attention to the children's personal, social and emotional development. Their initial home visits before children start nursery are effective in helping to build children's trust. They work closely with parents to make children feel secure and to settle them into the school. Once children are confident their independence and curiosity are fostered by staff who allow them to take the initiative and who extend children's skills while engaging in activities with them. The staff are very good at developing the children's language skills. They watch the gestures of young or new children and are careful to encourage communication by responding to their needs, by providing phrases for them or by modelling whole sentences. Relationships in the nursery are good. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and manage them well. Children are helpful and

supportive in general but when a few become boisterous the staff talk to them calmly about the effect their noise or behaviour is having on others and the children are generally quick to respond. The teaching of children who have a particular need or who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language is good. The high level of support and very good relationships with adults help these children to gain confidence and progress well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The learning opportunities that are provided by the school are varied, exciting and enriching.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. Because adults know the children so well, they are aware of the particular needs of individuals and encourage their development.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. Children who are new to English benefit from the very practical exploratory approach that is so well supported by the staff and they make good progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides well for children's spiritual development, children are encouraged to respect and value each other, parents and staff. Their moral development is very well supported, staff help children to understand right from wrong. Socially, there are many good opportunities for children to play and learn together. They have a good and positive understanding of cultural similarities and differences. They add to their own social and cultural experiences as they talk with other children and adults in the school.
How well the school cares for its children?	Very good: children are very well cared for and nurtured. The school has effective procedures in place to track children's individual progress.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents?	Very good. The school's partnership with parents is one of the important features of the school. The school is held in high regard by the parents and the local community.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the headteacher carefully and thoroughly ensures that everyone in the school including all the staff, parents and governors are aware of the best way they can help to make this a successful school
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: the governors are supportive and work hard to ensure the school offers a good quality of education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the school is aware of current best practice and is careful to compare itself with other nurseries in the area.
The strategic use of resources	Good: The school has a limited flexibility as it does not have a fully delegated budget. However, what resources it has are used well
Staffing accommodation and learning resources	Good overall: the staff are experienced and well qualified, including nursery nurses and learning support assistants, some of whom have taken additional qualifications. Accommodation is cramped and sub-standard but all the adults in the school are imaginative in the use of the building to overcome these difficulties. The school has a good range of learning resources that are used well to develop children's learning.



## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

83 questionnaires were sent out and 44 returned, 53 per cent. 11 (13 per cent) parents or carers attended the meeting held on 14 May 2001.

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents and carers consider that their children like school, they make good progress and their behaviour is good.</li><li>• Most parents and carers consider that children get the right amount of work to do at home, that teaching is good and they are kept well informed about their child's progress.</li><li>• Most parents and carers would be comfortable approaching the school and consider the range of activities outside of school is good and that the school works closely with them.</li><li>• Parents consider the school is well managed and helps their children to mature.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A proportion of parents and carers did not know if the school had high expectations of their children.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents and carers and found the expectations of the school to be high. Parents and carers who were spoken to at the meeting and around school were very positive and proud of the school and consider it gave their children a good start in life. The inspection team agrees with this.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children start school in the majority of instances with skill levels similar to those expected for their age. Some children have well developed skills and are high achievers. Most children make good progress and achieve well by the time they are ready to leave Hampden Way.
2. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They enter school with average levels of maturity and independence for their age. Within the caring environment of the school they gain independence and are well socialised; they explore their surroundings with confidence. Some children who have been at the school for five or six terms reach this early learning goal prior to their transfer to primary school. Standards have improved since the previous inspection
3. Communication skills in language and literacy are well developed and many children are well along the stepping stones by the time they leave Hampden Way. Most children will achieve this early learning goal by the time they finish the Foundation Stage. Children who have English as an additional language and are newly introduced to English at school make good progress and are well along the stepping stones by the time they leave nursery.
4. Mathematical development is as expected for the children's age. Children enter the nursery with a varied background of mathematical experiences and they make satisfactory progress overall. The school currently has mathematics as a priority for development. The bias to child-initiated activities in the school means that some opportunities to fully develop children's mathematical development are missed as there is insufficient adult intervention. However, when lessons are specifically structured to teach mathematical skills they are successful and the quality of teaching and learning is good.
5. Children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They are curious and keen to explore new surroundings in very practical ways. They gain a comprehensive understanding of how things work from the many practical opportunities to watch and explore the world about them. They listen to the ideas of others and share their thoughts when solving practical problems and investigations. They notice patterns in the natural and manufactured world and build on this growing awareness to construct their own patterns on both a large and small scale when drawing and painting, model making or using construction toys.
6. Children develop well physically. They are aware of and use the space around them well and this prevents accidents occurring. They are increasing their ability to move sideways in both directions when playing, *'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush'* with the large parachute, used as an activity resource, as well as learning how to adjust their speed when instructed to do so. In the outdoor area the children are provided with plenty of different levels and surfaces to use as well as a range of challenging climbing frames and balancing activities. They use tricycles and show good spatial awareness, rarely bumping into anything or over balancing. Where timid children are reluctant to use these resources on their own they are given encouragement and close supervision by staff. Children have good large motor skills and use climbing and balancing apparatus confidently. They are provided with many opportunities to develop finer

manipulative skills by using scissors, rollers, cutters and *small world* equipment.

7. Children achieve good standards in creative development. All children are encouraged to explore musical instruments and to make random sounds in child-initiated activities. In music making sessions, small groups are formed to allow for all the children to improve their skill in making musical rhythms; and the repetition of simple songs helps children with special educational needs to join in and make good progress. Dramatic story telling provides the children with opportunities to participate in expressing their feelings and to show a range of actions that increase their understanding. When staff engage in role-play with the children they are successful in extending the children's skills and thinking.
8. Very successful induction procedures, which include home visits for new children, enable the school to quickly socialise the children and this enables them to become confident, independent and successful learners. Children who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are well supported with much individual attention and they achieve well.

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

9. Parents' responses at their meeting and through the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. The evidence gathered during inspection confirms parents' view.
10. Children are eager and interested in coming to the school. They are happy, cheerful and have positive attitudes to learning. They are mostly fully involved in the events of the school day, taking interest in given activities and work hard.
11. The discipline, demeanour and attitudes displayed by the children in the classrooms and in playgrounds are a strength of the school. The behaviour of children, both in the classrooms and in the playground, is good. They show respect for one another and to adults. Children are responsive and courteous to their teachers and other adults in the classroom. The respect and trust of the community as a whole reinforce the positive relationships within school. Children are respectful and cheerful. They co-operate well with one another and during activities they share materials and appreciate each other's work. When given the opportunity to help, children carry out their tasks well, for example, washing paintbrushes or collecting toys at the end of a particular session.
12. The personal and social development of children is very good. The children are friendly, most are confident with high self-esteem and enjoy good relationships with one another and adults in the school. They concentrate well on teacher-selected or self-chosen activities. Children take turns courteously with equipment, such as the computer, and willingly tidy up at the end of sessions. For instance, children help in collecting building construction blocks and stacking them on the resource shelf.
13. The children settle down in classrooms quickly, show exemplary behaviour and obey instructions from their teachers and other adults in the classrooms. Despite the cramped conditions, the classrooms are orderly, and movement of children around the school is peaceful. The children play very well together on the playground, taking turns on apparatus and generally helping one another by sharing equipment and toys. There is a distinct sense of friendship and harmony, which pervades the whole school. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident from the fact that boys and girls mix well together, co-operate in classrooms and in the playground, and display, in general, positive attitudes towards one another. However, a degree of separation

between the boys and girls in certain child-initiated situations was noticed in classrooms and the playground. For example, at the beginning of the day one girl said to her mother ‘ *I am not going into red room there are too many boys*’. Frequently during child-initiated activities, there were all boys or all girls in the activity corners. When a group is directly supervised by an adult care is taken to have mixed groups of girls and boys.

14. Children with special educational needs respond with enthusiasm and take full advantage of the additional help which is available to them. These children, as well as those with English as a newly acquired language, are fully integrated within the school community.
15. The rate of attendance at the school is good. Punctuality on the whole is also good.
16. The children’s positive attitudes, good behaviour, and their purposeful relationships with adults in the school have a positive impact on standards of attainment. This reflects similar judgements made at the time of the previous inspection.

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

17. Teaching of all members of staff, teachers, nursery nurses, and support staff, is of a good quality. During the inspection 42 per cent of the teaching was very good, 88 per cent good or better and never less than satisfactory. As a result children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities, well matched to their developmental needs, which leads them to have positive attitudes to school and to make good progress.
18. Adults in the nursery pay close attention to the children’s personal, social and emotional development. Their initial home visits before the children start nursery are successful in helping to build the children’s trust. They work closely with parents to make children feel secure and to settle them into the school. When a child is having difficulty at the start of a session, he is comforted on the lap of a key worker who sensitively supports and carefully tracks him. Support staff pass on information about his emotional state to each other as he moves about the nursery until he is ready to play happily alongside his peers.
19. Once children are confident, their independence and curiosity are fostered by staff who allow them to take the initiative and who extend children’s skills while engaging in activities with them. The staff are very good at developing children’s language skills. They watch the gestures of young or new children and are careful to encourage communication by responding to their needs, by providing phrases for them or by modelling whole sentences. Teachers successfully set up situations in which older children support and ‘teach’ younger ones or those having difficulties. Where boys tend to dominate an activity, staff are skilful at including girls and often move into these situations bringing a number of girls with them to keep activities open to all. However, there are some child-initiated activities where boys and girls do not mix and staff do not intervene.
20. The staff ensure that children start working at activities quickly and that they sustain their interest for long periods by asking challenging questions and providing careful explanations. As a consequence of this, many of the children are confident enough to make mistakes but are able to persevere and to learn from them. For example, when finding out how to put the pieces of a track together, the teaching staff listen to the children and identify appropriate learning challenges for them. In a few sessions the questioning is not sufficiently focused to improve the quality of children’s scientific and

mathematical investigations. On these occasions when the children are completely engaged in exploring and observing, the teacher does not always take full advantage of the opportunities to encourage them to raise their own questions and to put forward possible answers. The teaching of children with special educational needs or those who have English as an additional language is successful and the high level of support and very good relationships with adults help these children to gain confidence and progress well.

21. Relationships in the nursery are good. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and manage them well. Children are helpful and supportive in general but when a few become boisterous the staff talk to them calmly about the effect their noise or behaviour is having on others and the children are generally quick to respond. Children know that the adults are there to support and help them. The regular observations made by the team on individual children mean that they know the children well. As staff keep a record of the children's progress on each of the areas of learning for the Foundation Curriculum they are aware when children are not taking advantage of all the areas and redirect individuals to ensure their learning is well rounded.
22. Adults are skilful at encouraging children to listen to each other as well as to adults and provide many opportunities for them to sing simple, repetitive songs. In music making sessions the size of the group is limited to allow for every individual to have plenty of attention and time to practise new skills on a selection of musical instruments. The teacher is successful in matching the activities to the developing knowledge and skills of the children. They recognise which instrument has been played, out of their range of sight, to make a particular sound, as well as learning how to repeat given rhythms.
23. Books, stories and rhymes play an important part in the nursery and consequently the teaching of communication, language and literacy is good. Teachers concentrate on children gaining experience of a selection of stories and carefully plan how their focus will shift from day to day to help children become familiar with the story and the language of books in general. During each morning and afternoon session six members of staff are available to take small groups for story sessions. The children thoroughly enjoy these occasions when they are frequently enlivened by very good story telling techniques and the provision of soft toys and model objects to aid the children's understanding.
24. The staff provide many opportunities for children to improve their large motor skills and as a result the teaching to the early learning goals of physical development is good despite the lack of a school hall. The improved outdoor area is well resourced for climbing, balancing, swinging and using bicycles and trucks. In addition, good use is made of the parachute to improve the skills of all the children. They move collaboratively and in time, developing co-ordination, while using this large piece of apparatus. The staff supervise this outside area well and encourage new or timid children to gradually increase their confidence and participate. Opportunities are provided both indoors and out for children to improve their fine motor skills by using one handed tools, for example, beaters, hammers, brushes and pens. Teachers ensure that children adopt the right hold for these and encourage children to become aware of the correct way to form letters, as they grow older.
25. At the end of each session staff evaluate children's development and use individual review sheets and blue book portfolios to record progress. Sometimes review sheets include descriptions of what children do rather than an evaluation of what skills and concepts have been learnt and this makes it difficult to show which stepping stone band the child is achieving in each area of learning. This also means that staff are

sometimes finding it difficult to identify the next steps in learning and development that a child needs to take. As a consequence some targets are too vague and do not link with the stepping stones, which form the basis of theme planning and weekly plans. This sometimes makes it difficult to show that children are making appropriate progress.

26. The quality of resources in the nursery is good and they are used imaginatively to inspire the interest of all the children, with the lack of resources in information and communication technology (ICT) as the most notable exception. Teachers do not make enough use of ICT to improve the children's skills and not all are sufficiently confident in their own knowledge to develop these skills successfully. However, teachers have made good use of their clear understanding of child development when adopting the new initiatives and have applied their professional judgement to do this in a realistic way. Teachers now have a very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and support staff are well employed in working closely with them in monitoring the development of all the children's skills.

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

27. The curriculum is varied, exciting and enriching. The school has been carefully organised into resource areas, these have been re-organised since the previous inspection to improve the learning opportunities for all children throughout each session. This is an improvement .
28. The staff have successfully drawn on their professional early years experience in order to incorporate the relevant elements of the new Foundation Stage into well-established nursery practice. The curriculum that is planned and provided reflects how well staff understand how children between the ages of three and five develop and learn in the areas of social, emotional, physical and intellectual achievements. Some very good subject portfolios have been put together to show how the school is ensuring all children achieve in these four areas and how the school curriculum fully meets the requirements of the new Foundation Stage guidance. Photographs and written examples illustrate how the nursery activities provide for the important stepping stones that children take in each of the six main areas of learning. These portfolios also show how seasonal changes have been imaginatively turned into a learning advantage. For example, in wet and windy weather the outdoor environment is well used for problem solving investigations as some children slide different sized balls through cardboard tubes fixed onto the wet slide and others find ways of crossing a waterlogged sandpit using milk crates and tyres.
29. The school provides a wide range of interesting and frequently challenging learning opportunities in every possible space available indoors and outdoors. As children arrive with their parents they are immediately able to find something that will enrich and deepen their growing knowledge and eagerness to learn. The consistent provision of certain learning areas inside and outside the nursery, such as the home corner, sand and water, block play, story corner and creative workshop, ensures good coverage of the six main areas of learning that constitute the Foundation Stage curriculum. These provide a stable resource that some children return to each day to practise skills, develop their thinking and widen their knowledge. The good quality learning resources are enhanced by a careful mix of familiar and natural materials, with educational toys and equipment that grasp children's interests and build on their curiosity and inclination to learn through play. For instance, when children go to the water-tray they find teabags and teapots in amongst the pouring and measuring containers and are immediately at home with the task of carefully measuring out just enough tea, so that it does not spill

over. The varied cultural and language experiences of children are also evident in the books, dressing up clothes, signs and notices and other learning resources that are available. This breadth of resources ensures that children of all ages and cultural experiences are developing their use of known materials in novel circumstances.

30. Since the last inspection good improvements have been made to extend opportunities for creative, imaginative and some technological learning. By monitoring the use of the home corner staff have identified ways of improving and extending its potential. Now it is an area that appeals equally to boys and girls, as they readily engage in making food using home produced dough, sharing it out evenly onto plates and washing up after themselves. The creative art and technology work base is well resourced and precious space has been used well to provide an accessible and exciting area where children work independently to produce models, collages and paintings. The school now has a computer and a programmable moving toy called a PIXIE. These resources are popular with children but are not made as regularly accessible as the other resources. This has had an impact on the overall number of children who can operate them independently and without needing close adult supervision and restricts children's development in ICT. There have been some improvements in the way that staff plan for mathematical development and record these experiences with children. Some children are confidently drawing on these mathematical opportunities as they talk and play but planned opportunities are not sufficiently available to ensure all children have these experiences.
31. The outdoor environment is organised with a good range of learning experiences. Those children who choose to develop their learning on a large scale use the dig-pit or large apparatus. They also have every opportunity to spend an appropriate amount of time in becoming engrossed in practical tasks, such as woodwork or model making using the facilities inside. They talk with knowledgeable adults and friends about their discoveries when trying out something new. The outdoor activities frequently complement what is happening inside and there is full coverage of all six areas of learning. For instance, one child talked about going on holiday. He looked at the written messages on holiday post cards with an adult. He then built on this talking and reading experience when he joined other children in an imaginative role-play in the school's '*travel agency*'. Here he wrote on a booking form for a holiday to the seaside.

32. Each day the areas have a new focus to extend children further and widen the curriculum opportunities. Both teachers and nursery nurses take an active part in planning and developing the weekly focus to the curriculum areas. At the end of each session they talk about what they have seen children doing and this discussion helps them to decide how they will keep certain resources available, and how they will adapt and change other areas. Through this regular review they share insights into how the activities and tasks meet the diversity of needs and interests of the children who come to each session.
33. The moral development of children is very well supported by curricular opportunities. Staff help children to understand right from wrong. Children are trusted to play and learn by being active, taking risks and not being afraid to make mistakes. The school provides well for children's spiritual development. Adults nurture a positive and welcoming ethos in the school, where children are frequently encouraged to respect and value each other, parents and staff. Children are developing a sense of their widening world from an enriching nursery experience. When staff intervene to aid children's developing social skills boys and girls do play and learn together successfully. However there are noticeable times in each session when boys and girls are engaged in separate learning tasks, which have become traditionally associated male or female roles. Children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds bring their own experiences to school; this helps all children to respond positively to diversity.
34. The school has made improvements in the way that staff keep track of what each child does and there are improved recording systems that include a blue book portfolio kept for every child. The portfolios illustrate in a very appealing way what children have done in most of the areas of learning. They provide a very useful guide to staff, parents and the children themselves on the progress that has been made from term to term.

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

35. The school is a happy, harmonious and an organised community, providing a safe and secure environment for its children. It is a caring school, meeting the educational needs of its children well. The school makes a positive contribution to children's learning by nurturing their personal and social development.
36. The school attaches paramount importance to the children's needs and fulfils its stated aims well. These positive and unambiguous objectives are well defined in the published Mission Statement of the school. The staff, throughout the whole school, work hard to make the Mission Statement a reality. There is a strong tradition of care and support, and also consideration for others. This clearly permeates the whole school community and instils a sense of trust, mutual respect and friendship between children and adults in the school. Good relationships exist amongst children of different ethnic backgrounds. Staff provides good role models for children by demonstrating ways of working co-operatively in classrooms and in playgrounds, being consistently courteous and polite in their relationships and welcoming visitors. Children are also encouraged to understand the wider community through visits to local shops, clinics or meeting local people, including the police.
37. Teachers, nursery nurses and other support staff know their pupils well. They are aware of the likes and dislikes of children and make suitable provision for their needs. They act as role models for the children and treat them as friends.
38. The school's approach to behaviour and discipline is fully set out in the school's behaviour policy. There are efficient procedures for monitoring children's behaviour



and personal development. In the case of any form of intimidation or bullying, children are encouraged to be more assertive without becoming aggressive in any way. Children are also encouraged to bring all such incidents to an adult's attention as soon as they arise. Adults provide a verbal strategy, encouraging the child to speak out in a firm voice and say, *'Please don't do that, I don't like it.'* The school encourages the use of rewards, which are more personal and meaningful. These include individual care, attention, respect and praising children's achievements and positive behaviour. Incidents of persistent harassment or bullying are rare and inspectors found no evidence of such behaviour.

39. The school provides appropriate opportunities to more able children. It also offers the necessary care, support and help to children with special educational needs. They have full access to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The commitment shown by the school to pupils with special educational needs and other ethnic groups is fully inclusive and all these pupils are considered an integral part of the school community.
40. The arrangements for child protection are very good and the school complies with the necessary statutory requirements. The deputy headteacher is the designated person for implementing the necessary child protection procedures, and follows the guidelines of the London Borough of Barnet. No such case is under investigation at the time of inspection.
41. The school has appropriate procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality. The register is marked efficiently by the headteacher, as the children enter the school at the start of their morning or afternoon session. Registration is rechecked once the children have settled down in their respective classes.
42. The school is successful in promoting the health, safety and general well being of its children. It works closely with the appropriate local authority's departments for pupils' welfare and safety. Good support for individual children is provided by outside agencies as required.
43. The school maintains meticulous pastoral records for monitoring each individual child's personal development. It makes use of appropriate strategies to instil respect and friendship with children from different backgrounds.
44. The inspection team recognises the positive atmosphere in the school and the determination of staff to nurture children's different needs. The whole school community, including governors, adults in the school, parents and their children, are fully involved and included in school life.
45. The school monitors children's achievements and progress over time very well. Improvements have been made in the school since the previous inspection in the way that staff record children's progress and significant steps in development. The link between gathering information about individual children, recording and using this to help plan is clearly stated in the school document on record keeping and planning. Currently, a very good range of information is gathered about each child from discussions with parents, observations of children, children's own comments, and samples of work and the excellent use of photographs that capture children's involvement in a variety of tasks. This information gives sufficient detail about children who are new to English. It also contributes to the evidence needed for reviewing the progress of children with special educational needs.
46. The staff aim to link the descriptions in the individual developmental review sheets and

blue book portfolios to the Foundation Stage stepping stones and early learning goals. This link is not sufficiently consistent at the moment. Sometimes review sheets include descriptions of what children do rather than an evaluation of what skills and concepts have been learnt. This makes it difficult to show which stepping stone band the child is achieving in each area of learning. This also means that staff sometimes find it difficult to identify the next steps in learning and development that a child needs to take. As a consequence some targets are too vague and do not link with the stepping stones, which form the basis of theme planning and weekly plans.

47. Staff are very committed to making their system of record keeping and planning work. They meet daily to pull together their extensive knowledge about the children and work well as a team to make sure children progress and learn. They need further guidance on making the record keeping and planning system a more manageable process so that targets can be grouped in relation to the stepping stone bands. With such improvements the system will prove a valuable approach to the assessment of all children in the school.

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

48. The school enjoys strong, positive and purposeful links with parents, who, in turn, view the school with a high degree of confidence and are very supportive. The school's partnership with parents is one of the important features of the school. The school is held in high regard by both the parents and the local community. Parents did not raise any significant concerns or issues at the parents' meeting or in the questionnaire.
49. Parents find the staff helpful and approachable and are appreciative of the school's 'Open Door' policy. The school listens to parents, invites their views and considers the issues they raise with care and sensitivity, and then responds swiftly to their concerns.
50. The school is very successful in establishing a valuable and purposeful partnership with parents. Parents feel welcome in the school, and it encourages parents to play an important part in supporting their children's learning at home. This parental commitment has a positive impact on their children's progress and personal and social development. Since the Foundation Stage curriculum was first introduced in September 2000, the school has held two discussion groups with parents, outlining the main features of the curriculum and how they are used in the school.
51. The school holds three consultation sessions with parents; one in the school's first term, a second one mid-year and a final one when parents discuss their children's final profile before they are written by the teacher. Such consultations often give clear indication of the children's personal development. The school also maintains a portfolio for each child, showing the work done by that child in the classroom. The individual portfolios contain the pictures, drawing and photos of a child's involvement in a particular activity, and informs the parents of their child's achievements and progress. The school prospectus is a clear and concise document giving parents a pen-picture of the school, including its aims and objectives, the curriculum provision and the importance the school attaches to working in partnership with parents.
52. The school maintains a regular and purposeful, workable contact with parents. They are well informed through newsletters, and formal and informal meetings. In one of the recent newsletters, the headteacher explained in detail the criteria for awarding 16 full-time places for children at the school. The impact of the home-school diary is to augment an ongoing dialogue between the school and parents. Parents are encouraged to write comments in the diary and to let the school know about their children's likes and dislikes. In this way, the school can build up an increasingly

detailed picture of the children.

53. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the initial and review processes in relation to legislation. They are informed regularly about their children's targets and progress.
54. The school emphasises the importance of working with parents and encouraging them to play an active part in their children's education at the Foundation Stage, and works hard to get the parents involved. The school receives strong support from parents, through voluntary contributions each term towards the purchase of toys and other equipment for use by the children. For instance, during the last autumn term, the school used the money from the '*Toy Fund*' in order to provide seating facilities around the flowerbed and supplies for two pet guinea pigs. A new wooden playhouse for the garden was installed last October. A small group of dedicated parents form the Fund-raising Committee. They organise the Summer Fair. Before the end of the summer term, a picnic for the entire school is held at a local park. The school considers this as a family day and urges parents to attend.
55. A small group of volunteer parents also help in the classrooms. Parents from ethnic groups are encouraged to read stories to children in their native language in the first instance so that children can understand it. The story is subsequently read in English so that children can relate to its meaning in this language. A list of suggestions on ways in which parents can help in the school is displayed in the hall. Other volunteer parents are asked to help the school from home as well, for instance, threading cords through the story-sack bags and cutting out felt letters. Overall, the school's links with parents and the contribution they make to their children's learning are very good. Links with parents continue to be a strength of the school as they were at the time of the last inspection.

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

56. The school is led and managed very effectively. The headteacher uses her extensive knowledge of nursery education to ensure that the school's priorities are always in the best interests of the children and their learning. She has very carefully introduced the Foundation Stage curriculum this year. After consultation with colleagues any previous particularly useful practice within the school was retained and matched up with the requirements of the early learning goals. This professional and measured approach has led to a successful transition to the Foundation Stage, enabling the school to maintain the strong areas identified in the last inspection.
57. Great care is taken to ensure the school's efficiency in teaching and learning and there is an evaluation session after each morning and afternoon session to check the learning intentions have been met and future planning is informed. This detailed evaluation ensures that teachers know their children well and plan with this information in mind.
58. Everything in the Nursery has been carefully thought through; the various activity areas or stations are very carefully designed to provide the maximum stimulus and resources to enable children to access the Foundation Stage curriculum. Nothing is left to chance and all adults in the school have an input into the best way to improve the school's provision, on an ongoing basis. Parents are given a good deal of information about the school. They have a clear understanding about the educational value of the structured play and activities in which their children engage. Parents are very positive and supportive of the school because they are well informed.

59. The school keeps detailed records of the children's progress. There are descriptions in the individual developmental review sheets and blue book portfolios of how children are progressing. However, these are not always sufficiently evaluative and do not always link successfully with the stepping stones, which form the basis of theme planning and weekly plans. This sometimes makes it difficult to determine that children are making appropriate progress.
60. The headteacher is available at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session both to register children's attendance and to deal with any concerns that parents might have. Parents appreciate this informal access to the headteacher, which contributes to the good relationship between the school and parents. The exchange of views that takes place is useful and the information gathered is used to the benefit of the children concerned.
61. The deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs co-ordinator, works very closely with the headteacher to manage the school. She is a model practitioner and fulfils this role well, acting as a good role model to children and staff alike. The procedure for identifying children with special educational needs is successful. Although very few children are on the register for special educational needs they are well supported. The school monitors children who may need support in the future very carefully.
62. The governing body takes an active interest in the school and is very supportive. The chair of governors, in particular, has great affection for the school as he attended it himself; he works closely and successfully with the headteacher. The governing body has various committees that regularly meet and provide guidance and support to the headteacher. As it does not have a delegated budget, limited financial resources are available to the school. The finance committee carefully manages these resources and principles of best value are used. Funds raised by parents are often used to provide additional items of equipment.
63. The previous report identified some weaknesses in curriculum management. These have been completely addressed and the monitoring of teaching and learning is now a useful part of the school's management. The greater delegation of curriculum responsibilities has led to even closer teamwork and even more effective leadership and management of the curriculum.
64. The school is housed in a prefabricated building that was built during the war years. The nursery school was established in 1946. Over the years, it has become apparent that the present accommodation is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the staff make the best possible use of the space available in two designated classrooms and in other areas.
65. The staff work hard to improve the environment with a range of lively displays along the corridors and in the classrooms and these add considerably to the school's welcoming appeal. It also shows a range of good quality work, which the children are capable of producing. The display in the entrance hall is particularly interesting, as it provides information about the six areas of early learning goals and exhibits high quality paintings by children. The conditions inside the classrooms are cramped and there is inadequate space for this age group. However, the school provides a very attractive playground environment for children. This has a positive effect on their quality of life.
66. At story time, every available space in the building is used, including the head-teacher's office as well as the staff room. Although there is no site supervisor, the

school building is maintained in reasonably clean condition.

67. The outdoor area is a pleasing contrast to the restricted classroom environment. The playground is large and attractive, with an adventure play area, a conservation area as well as the extension of the indoor *'home corner'*. The teachers' attention to details ensures that children have a variety of spaces to use for different activities. Although there is a good range of play equipment, there is no large apparatus, such as a climbing frame. The school recognises the need to provide better facilities in order to provide the full range of activities required for the Foundation Stage curriculum, but has been constrained because of an imminent move to new premises. Plants and shrubs provide small patches of greenery. As most of the playground is covered in concrete, the school uses soft mats by some of the equipment, such as a the fixed train and swing, for additional safety.
68. The previous inspection report also identified the unsatisfactory and cramped conditions in classrooms and the size of the indoor accommodation in general. As the result of the initiatives taken by the headteacher in recent months, the school is likely to be relocated on a new nearby site within the next two to three years.
69. Generally, learning resources are good for the needs of all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the range of children in the school. They are well stored and accessible. The main library, located in the headteacher's room is generously stocked and supplements the class-based libraries. Generally, the quality and quantity of books in the library in the main hall is adequate. However, the school has a very limited facility for information and communication technology. The school also makes use of outside resources, for example, visits to the Science Museum in London, or to the local parks.
70. The school buys toys from voluntary contributions made by parents each term. These helped to fund the covered way on the exterior of the building, which extends the learning space. The playground has been developed gradually. It has two pergolas to create shade and shelter, a large playhouse to extend the indoors home corner. The children are also provided with opportunities for imaginative role-play, planting and dig-pit areas. They can use a variety of equipment for play, such as tricycles, a swing, a slide and a fixed train.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. The governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- develop all staff subject knowledge of in information and communication technology;
- improve the quality and range of resources.  
(paragraphs: 26, 69 and 106)

The headteacher and staff should:

- use the extensive data gathered by the school more effectively by:
  - ensuring the individual child review sheets include assessments on children's progress that are more evaluative and less descriptive;
  - link these evaluations more closely to the Foundation Stage curriculum.  
(paragraphs: 25,46,47and 59)

Other issues to be considered by the school.

Develop strategies to ensure that boys and girls integrate in all the activities provided;  
(paragraphs: 13,19,30,33 and 76)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	42	46	12	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)	44
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

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	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	1.12

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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	18.3:1

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	122

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.9:1
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	214621
Total expenditure	213098
Expenditure per pupil	3874.51
Balance brought forward from previous year	nil
Balance carried forward to next year	nil



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	83
Number of questionnaires returned	44

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	18	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	50	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	61	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	36	5	0	2
The teaching is good.	43	48	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	41	5	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	23	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	52	0	0	11
The school works closely with parents.	55	36	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	45	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	45	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	43	5	0	5

## **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**

72. The strength of the school lies in the way it meets the shared aim that every child should feel included, happy, confident and proud of having a unique identity. All members of staff work successfully to welcome and settle new children. No child is overlooked even when the nursery is at its busiest and every available space is in use. Staff use time and space to great effect so children can develop their individual interests yet find a friendly face when needed.
73. The personal and individual development of each child is fully discussed amongst staff and with parents. Staff make good use of the knowledge they have about individual children as they plan the curriculum and select new curriculum themes.
74. They take a positive approach to the different languages that children speak, seeing these as a firm foundation to learning English rather than a barrier. As a consequence children make good progress in learning English and they feel proud of their additional linguistic achievements. Written and taped information in the different languages of the school community are available to inform parents. There are multilingual signs and notices. Some parents are readily sharing their skills by coming into school to tell stories in Gujarati, Spanish and Greek, cook with the children and share special events and celebrations such as Eid and Rosh Hashanah. Children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds bring their own experiences to school and this helps all children to respond positively to diversity.
75. There are many good opportunities for children to play and learn together. Most of the time children are willing to take turns, listen to each other and consider how their actions affect their friends. As a consequence they extend and refine their social development. Many children have become experienced in leading and organising others and some work together well on quite challenging tasks. It is rare to find individual children who are alone and aimless, as adults take an active part in encouraging them to move from being on their own to contributing to small and larger group tasks. When three boys used the pulley to lift a bucket of sand high in the air a girl stood nearby and watched them but did not attempt to join in. A member of staff noticed this and she promptly joined the group, holding the girl's hand. She talked to the boys about what they were doing and found a role for the girl in their play. Once she was satisfied that the girl was being included she moved away.
76. When staff intervene to aid children's developing social skills boys and girls play and learn together successfully. However, there are noticeable times in each session when boys and girls are engaged in separate learning tasks which have become traditionally associated with male or female roles. For example, the boys at times dominate the use of block play, the railway track and other wheeled toys while the girls are painting, making collage patterns and sharing storybooks. As these boys and girls are not socialising together they are missing the opportunity to share their different learning experiences, from discovering that girls can be builders and boys can tell stories. There is also a danger that individual children see areas in the nursery as inaccessible. For instance, when one girl arrived at the nursery she announced that she did not want to go in one of the rooms as there were too many boys there. Staff are aware of the educational gains from giving children the freedom to choose what they do for

substantial periods within in each session. However, on some occasions they are not monitoring what happens sufficiently closely in order to ensure that both girls and boys use the different resources and areas in the indoor and outdoor learning environment together.

77. The moral development of children is very well supported by staff. They help children to understand right from wrong. Children are trusted to play and learn by being active, taking risks and not being afraid to make mistakes. The good organisation of the school enables them to do this within a clear structure so that no child behaves in inappropriate ways. There are very clear boundaries that all respect. At times, staff give firm and calm reminders to individual children and this helps to create an environment where all children show a respect for each other, the school property and the natural environment.
78. The school provides well for children's spiritual development. Adults nurture a positive and welcoming ethos in the school, where children are frequently encouraged to respect and value each other, parents and staff. Children are developing a sense of their widening world from an enriching nursery experience. At times, this draws children into conversations about birth, life and death. When a group discover a frog in the small pond they are fascinated and wonder where it has come from. They begin to talk about its appearance and wonder what will happen if it gets sick. Children enjoy hearing about the experiences of their friends and they accept without judgement that the different faith groups may have different beliefs and celebrate different festivals.

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

79. Children enter the nursery with average skills in speaking and listening, and in early writing and reading. Their development is good as most are well along the stepping stones by the time they leave the nursery. The majority will reach the learning goals in communication, language and literacy by the end of the Foundation Stage.
80. The oldest children show that they are fluent communicators when engaged in activities that interest them or when working closely with members of the team. Even those children who are new to the nursery quickly become confident and they move from using single word answers to short phrases and are soon speaking in whole sentences.
81. Children who are reluctant speakers or who have speech difficulties also make very good progress and quickly become happy to talk at length to special friends. Where children enter the nursery at the early stages of learning English they communicate at first by gestures but soon begin to develop their speaking skills and to show their personalities.
82. The majority of children are able to ask and answer simple, direct questions. High attaining children are able to answer more challenging questions, especially about memorable experiences, for example, a visit to the Science Museum or about the visiting musicians. These children can order their thoughts and provide a clear factual report of events or activities that interest them. Most children follow simple instructions, for example, when they are playing parachute games and are learning about moving it *'higher, lower, faster and slower'*.
83. Children who are new to English benefit from the very practical exploratory approach that is so well supported by the staff and make good progress. They are gradually encouraged to talk about what they are doing, what they can touch, see and hear. As there is an emphasis on encouraging all children to communicate and reflect in words

on what they are doing and learning, those who are more fluent in English provide a good model for others. When children came together to explore the depths of the school pond their talk focused on the frogs they found. The repetitive nature of the conversation as each child added to the initial description helped children new to English. They were also able to talk about the frog's legs, cold skin and big eyes.

84. Whilst there is no planned time for children to report on what they have done and learnt during each session there are some informal opportunities that are currently in use. For instance, when a member of staff joins children lifting a bucket of sand up on a rope pulley the opening questions are about what the children have done, what happened and what might have caused the sand to fall out when they let go of the rope. This provides an immediate way for children to report on their learning and move from the here and now into the immediate past. The bilingual children in the group are equally keen to share their ideas.
85. Increasingly very good use is being made of the individual blue book portfolios to help children report on earlier learning and to see where they have developed. A newly arrived bilingual child finds the photographs in her portfolio fascinating and she uses appropriate grammatical structures to describe what she is doing in the photographs and compare her hair style. She has made very good progress in her use of English over a very short period of time. This is not uncommon given the strong emphasis on language and communication skills.
86. In group tasks, story times and circle time careful attention is given to supporting the understanding and participation of children new to English. The excellent visual props provided by the story sacks and other resources are attractive, clearly linked to the telling of a story and accessible for use by the children. There is a positive commitment to involve parents so that children can continue to develop their home languages and that linguistic diversity is valued by all.
87. Children with special educational needs attain satisfactory standards for their age and make satisfactory progress. Adults communicate well with reluctant speakers and those with speech difficulties and respond promptly to children's gestures. Children are encouraged to use short phrases to express their needs and staff model sentence structure for them. The small story groups for those children who find it difficult to pay attention in large groups provide the opportunity to match the story level to the interest level of the children, to build on the children's experience, to increase vocabulary and improve participation.
88. Children are encouraged to use language to help them to think. Adults are good at joining in children's talk about what they are doing and what the outcomes will be, for example, when playing a board game or when finding out how to make the pointed part of a rocket from large blocks. High attaining children are encouraged to explain to others about how things work, for example, when investigating a pulley or when working on the computer. Adult intervention ensures that children get the most out of the activity by encouraging them to extend their vocabulary and understanding. Adults also join children in role-play situations and are skilful at leaving the initiative with children while helping them to extend their thinking and communication skills.
89. The majority of children thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and participating in reciting rhymes and singing songs. All the children sustain their attention on these activities for long periods in small groups, where the stories are well matched to their interest and ability levels. Excellent story props and dramatic story telling techniques capture the children's imagination. The children learn how books work, how the text in English

goes from left to right and begin to become familiar with story language and the way stories are structured. In these sessions most of the children put forward their own contributions, and are encouraged to predict what will happen next.

90. Older and high attaining children select their favourite book. A four year old girl chose to retell the story of, *'Whatever Next'* by Jill Murphy, the focus book during the inspection, and retold the story using the pictures for prompts but incorporating many of the words and phrases from the text. A high attaining boy was also able to retell his favourite story, *'Rosie's Walk'* by Pat Hutchins. Again, he concentrated on the pictures, was particularly interested in the action displayed there, and was able to use much of the book's language in retelling it. Both children realised that they were not reading the words and this indicates that they know that print conveys meaning.
91. Younger children show an interest in books and ask to share them with an adult, although more girls than boys do this as a matter of choice. These younger children are content to talk about each picture but have already got some idea of how books work and can remember some of the book's language. Children learn to understand that all languages are valued when they listen to parents tell stories in Spanish or Turkish.
92. The nursery is rich in promoting writing; there are labels on a large range of things, including children's work, milk labels, and musical instruments. There are also a number of places where scripts from other languages are used, for example, as welcoming signs on entry to the nursery, on the language table and on some equipment drawers. Children recognise their names beside milk cartons, and under their photograph. Many of the older children are proud of the fact that they can write their name and some do this by using a mixture of marks and some recognisable letters, while others use a mixture of block capitals and print, and a few can form all the letters correctly. They are also encouraged to focus on writing individual words when they label body parts, instruments and countries in the *'travel agents'* home corner.
93. Their attention is drawn to the initial sound of their name and other children's through the use of simple games and the children show a growing awareness of sounds associated with letters. For example, when two boys were writing a sign for the frog they made a very good effort, with the help of a teacher, to write the word. They are aware that print conveys meaning when they dictate their own story to an adult, when they write and post their cards and when they make their own versions of books. There is good evidence that the children have plenty of experience at linking meaning to making marks when they write greeting cards, menus and signs in the playground. The older children show that they know how to hold a pen correctly and where to start writing. The younger children are given many experiences for mark-making in different media by chalking in the playground, on a blackboard and in paint. They also have plenty of experience to improve their fine motor skills by using scissors, glue sticks, and small building blocks.

94. There is a good supply of books available for children to choose from. However, more copies of the focus book would be useful for children to share with each other, or to look at while following taped versions. An increased supply of big books would help children see the text more clearly when working in a larger group. Children become familiar with the use of information books, for example, as part of a display of space rockets or after the children have had experience of working with a pulley. These appeal more to those boys who do not select story books. Although the computer is used for mark making, it is not used sufficiently to develop the children's use of mathematical and scientific language as well as for *talking books* programs.

### **Mathematical development**

95. Standards in mathematical development are as expected for children's age. Children enter the nursery with a varied background in mathematical experiences and they make satisfactory progress overall. The school currently has mathematical development as a priority for development. The bias to child-initiated learning in the school means that some teaching opportunities to fully develop children's mathematical development are missed. However, when children are more formally taught the quality of teaching and learning is good, but frequently only a few children benefit from this adult involvement.
96. Children are developing mathematical language. One girl playing in the sand tray for example, said '*this is getting bigger*' as she put sand on to a shovel. Children develop a fundamental understanding of space, weight, capacity and length through practical activities and explorations. For example, when rolling out dough they understand that one piece is bigger than another. During a small group lesson with the youngest children, the teacher chanted the poem '*Insey Winsey*' *Spider* and children made the measuring movements with their hands. They play a *Crocodile* board game that involves counting backward and forward to five and moving counters up and down the board. Children are confident and most count accurately both up and down the board. In a music lesson children talked about one of the wood blocks being long and another short.
97. Children are developing a good basic knowledge of number. There are number displays including number lines and numbered *parking bays* in the playground in which children park their tricycles. Children sequence numbers in the right order to five and many beyond this to ten. Higher attainers know their numbers even further. Children learn one to one correspondence by putting tools onto shapes on a board. They are developing the concepts of addition and subtraction when taking things out and putting items into containers.
98. There are many practical opportunities for children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language to develop their knowledge of mathematics. For instance, when they are encouraged to sort small world animals into type and discuss size, when they match cups to saucers in the home corner or in imaginative play when they match candles to pretend birthday cakes. The staff have taught the children several number songs and the repetition of these enables these children to participate in learning. They also use large number lines, hopscotch and counting to five to build children's confidence.

99. Teaching of mathematics is good when teachers use opportunities as they present themselves during the course of child-initiated activities, or when there is a planned mathematical activity. Very occasionally, however, opportunities are missed for intervention in an activity to draw out and develop the mathematical language from the activity, for example, when children are counting out toys in the small world corner. The inspection found that all staff now have a heightened awareness of developing children's mathematical skills, but this has not yet had a full impact on intervention in the classroom and the teaching and learning in mathematics.

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

100. Overall, children are given a good level of support to develop and broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world. Most enter the nursery with a basic knowledge about their immediate world. The successful combination of planning, teaching and observing adopted by staff ensures children benefit fully from the broad range of learning opportunities accessible in the whole school. They make good steps in their learning in most aspects of this area and will reach the early learning goals at the end of the reception year.
101. All children are included in groups who explore their environment and are given direct experience of caring for the pet guinea pig and collecting frog spawn; staff also build on children's own experience of pets at home. Good teaching has helped children to develop their curiosity of the natural environment and their knowledge and understanding is developing well. Photographs of signs in the environment are taken and discussions with children focus on the meanings they convey. Children with speech problems sustain their investigation of how a pulley works, for a long time, although they find it difficult to explain their understanding in words.
102. Where children make most progress is when they are curious and keen to explore new surroundings in very practical ways. They gain a much more comprehensive understanding of how things work from the many practical opportunities to watch, explore with all their senses, listen to the ideas of others and share their own thoughts in solving practical problems and investigations. They notice patterns in the natural and manufactured world and build on this growing awareness to construct their own patterns on both a large and small scale.
103. They have a good and positive understanding of cultural similarities and differences. They add to their own social and cultural experiences as they talk with other children and adults in the school. They have growing sense of belonging to different social groups: their family, their community of friends and the nursery group. As they share important parts of their personal identity they develop an understanding of their place in time and space. They frequently link what they see and do with recalled experiences, such as going on holiday, taking a sick animal to the vet, watching visiting musicians and celebrating Eid. Not only do they report on what happened at these times, but also on their feelings and responses. One strength of the nursery lies in the way all adults draw on these recalled experiences to plan themes and extension activities that develop children's learning further. Throughout the year children are introduced to a variety of cultural events within the nursery and this is enriched by outside visits, including a Countryside Centre and the Science Museum. Focused activities are planned which ensure that all children benefit and broaden their awareness of the world.
104. Children are learning through the current theme about their immediate environment and those who are able to are extending this into thinking about travel around the world.

They use appropriate vocabulary to compare the natural features of different landscapes as they look at postcards from the seaside, the mountains and the countryside. Adults make very good use of story books and props to consider the differences between a familiar environment in the day and night time.

105. Children concentrate and persevere with the challenge from the explorations and problem solving tasks that they have chosen and most children complete a task before moving to a fresh challenge. For example, when two children started to construct a house with hollow blocks and planks they were not distracted until the walls were finished. When one noticed there was no entrance to their house they worked together to find a way of moving a block at right angles to act as the door. All staff carefully balance the tasks they lead with activities that children are able to carry out independently. Staff ensure that children are developing well and that they do not concentrate on physical activities at the expense of technological and scientific knowledge and understanding.
106. Progress in the use of information and communication technology and other technology is not so evident for most children. There are still limitations in the time and space allocated to enable free access and exploratory use of equipment such as the computer, programmable toys and tape recorders. Two or three children can only use the computer at a time and currently they still need adult involvement to provide some guidance on mouse and keyboard control. Whilst many resources for construction, role play and creative development are available daily indoors and outdoors currently technological equipment is only available at timetabled times indoors. Not all children have equal access to this provision and only those who are familiar with the computer use it. They are not yet sharing their skills with other children as much of the software is not geared towards co-operative games.
107. Children with emotional difficulties or those who have difficulty in leaving their carers are identified quickly by the staff and are both sensitively supported and carefully tracked until they are ready to play alongside peers. Older and higher attaining children are encouraged to support those who have difficulties and provide good role models for them to trust. When children are boisterous the staff manage them well by teaching them to control their actions and noise and by drawing their attention to the effect it has on others. Children are very good at taking turns and sharing resources.

### **Physical development**

108. Children's physical development is good and they make good progress along the stepping stones so that almost all children including those who have English as an additional language are likely to achieve these early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is a similar level of development to the previous inspection. Children climb and balance with confidence on the extensive low level apparatus that is put out and experiment with different ways of moving. They concentrate well and focus on steering their tricycle or shopping trolley carefully and accurately around the playground. All children make good progress in their use of the variety of tools that are available in the nursery. They are taught the safe use of certain tools such as scissors, hammers, saws, paintbrushes and pencils. Children combine their growing physical co-ordination with a purposeful concentration to construct models, hammer nails in wood and make paper flags to hoist on ropes.
109. Children are aware of and use the space around them well and this prevents accidents occurring. They are increasing their ability to move sideways in both directions when playing, *'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush'* with the parachute, as well as learning



how to adjust their speed when instructed to do so. In the outdoor area the children are provided with plenty of different levels and surfaces to use as well as a range of challenging low level climbing frames and balancing activities. Where timid children are reluctant to use these on their own they are given encouragement and close supervision by staff. They have good large motor skills and are provided with many opportunities to develop finer manipulative skills by using scissors, rollers, cutters and *small world* activities using small models and apparatus.

110. When listening to music on a cassette deck they start themselves or when singing nursery rhymes children will sway rhythmically to the music or the poem. Children enjoy manipulating materials, for example some children mostly boys used a hammer and nails with confidence to join two pieces of wood together. When shown they used a clamp to make sure that the materials would not slip. Children also make models using re-cycled materials and tape successfully. They cut dextrously with scissors. One child who had made a rocket ship out of plastic water bottles pointed to the *motors* he had made and said '*This is where the fire comes out*'. It is noticeable that children will sometimes tend to cluster in child-initiated groups by gender, boys dominating the woodwork table and girls the role-play corner. There were, however some exceptions to this and a boy and girl worked well together on a construction set.
111. Teaching is good. Teachers set up situations to develop children's physical development, for example, the children had to move over an extensive assault-style course that involved considerable balance and climbing skills. However, the lack of high climbing apparatus restricts this activity. The activity was linked usefully with mathematical development when children had to record the number of circuits they had completed themselves. One high attaining boy took it upon himself to monitor all the scores.
112. Much good use is made of the generous outside area for physical development when weather permits, and even when it is raining appropriate activities take place under a large covered area. During one outside session, children learned to roll a ball accurately and in a controlled way across a large parachute in use for group activities. They were improving their aim and using words like '*slower, faster, higher and lower.*' In this session children with special educational needs and lacking confidence were carefully supported so that they could fully participate. The adult was very clear with her instructions and the activity was effective.

### **Creative development**

113. Creative development is good. Children have many interesting and varied opportunities to extend their creative skills and knowledge. They are making good progress in most aspects of creative development and are well along the path towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
114. Imaginative role play is a strength and the emphasis placed on improving this aspect by staff has been rewarded by the enthusiastic involvement of children throughout the day. Boys and girls have moved beyond simply pretending to be like adults and now become engaged in lengthy story plots and extended roles. For example, when they pack for a picnic, they find a good spot to eat and take on more elaborate roles as the picnic develops. Children of all ages extend this imaginative role play from their time spent in the home corner into other situations when working together with large blocks, with small world toys, wheeled toys and sand and water toys. They are equally confident when they create a shared imaginary world with others, as when they become absorbed in their individual play. The value of such co-operative play lies in the way they

communicate their ideas to agree how objects will represent their imaginary world. Children new to speaking in English benefit from this focused communication and quickly become involved in the shared fantasy. They draw on the many interesting stories that are shared with them by staff and parents and use the excellent resources to very good effect.

115. Throughout the school children have good opportunities to experiment with colour, texture, shape and a wide range of materials. They turn recycled packages into individual creations. They draw on a growing understanding of how colours merge and how shapes fit together. They understand that textures in paint can represent features. They design and make increasingly complex representations of their imaginary and real world. They are proud of what they have created and carefully carry around models and drawings to show interested adults. Teaching is good, children are helped to be more adventurous in their use of different media by the sensitive questioning and feedback given by adults. When the adult has gone beyond simply saying something is *'nice'* or *'good'* and engaged in a more extended description of what has been created, the children are encouraged to return and apply their skills to achieve even more.
116. Children are able to use a good range of musical instruments. They experiment with different sounds and some are starting to build up rhythms and tap out simple patterns, moving from one instrument to another. When they are joined by an adult they are helped to focus on what they have created and then try out more complex rhythms. Most children enjoy the adult led singing sessions though these can be quite brief. There are few opportunities planned to link singing to music making with the instruments. As the instruments are only located in one part of the nursery not all children have equal access throughout each session, this restricts the opportunities for musical development quite significantly.
117. Staff cater very well for all children by offering them a full range of sensory experiences that stimulate a good understanding of the world around them. Children are also enabled to use these sensory experiences to reflect and represent their inner thoughts and feelings. There is a good range of resources available. When children go into the home play area they can handle and manipulate play dough to make imaginary food in the kitchen area. They can find a secluded corner where they can compare textures, sounds and the effects of torch light and shadows and become immersed in their own imagination. They feel secure enough to be able to share their own fears of the dark, noises in the night and shadows cast by torches and lamplight.