

INSPECTION REPORT

ABERCROMBY NURSERY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

LEA area: LIVERPOOL

Unique reference number: 104507

Headteacher: Mrs E. Hunter

**Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett
1569**

Dates of inspection: Monday 4th June – Wednesday 6th June 2001

Inspection number: 213245

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:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Falkner Street Liverpool
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Appropriate authority:	Liverpool LEA
Chair of Governors:	Annette Mines
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

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			Mathematical development	How well are pupils taught?
			Knowledge and Understanding of the World	How well is the school led and managed?
			English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
OIN 11084	JANE HUGHES	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?
OIN 11321	JUNE HUNTER	Team inspector	Physical development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Creative development	
			Personal, Social and Emotional development	
			Special educational needs	
			Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abercromby is a small nursery school situated in Toxteth near the centre of Liverpool. There are 56 children on roll, 53 of whom attend full time with the remaining 3 part time. Most children live in the immediate area of the school and there are high levels of deprivation within the local community. Over half are eligible to receive free school meals. The children are taught by four teachers, including the headteacher, three nursery officers (NNEB) and two classroom assistants. Two of the teachers job share. In addition, a support worker is currently employed full time to provide additional classroom support for children who have special educational needs. Seven children have been identified as having special educational needs (13%). A higher percentage of children (21%) do not have English as their first language, with Arabic and Cantonese the most frequently spoken languages. Children's attainment on entry to school varies considerably but is below average overall. More children are arriving in school with poor language skills and delays in their personal, social and emotional development than previously.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Abercromby is an effective nursery school. The majority of children are on line to achieve the national standards by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage (this is when they leave reception class). This represents good achievement and all groups make good progress. The quality of teaching, management and leadership is good overall. Children enjoy coming to school with most working hard and behaving well.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good
- Ensures children make good progress
- Promotes good relationships
- Headteacher monitoring of children's work is good
- Provision for cultural development is very good
- Maintains effective links with parents
- Assesses children's progress very well and takes good care of them

What could be improved

- Children's writing skills are not developed enough
- Supervision of the outdoor area
- Pace of some of the lessons
- Ensure that learning opportunities are not missed

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1999 and found to have serious weaknesses. It was subsequently visited by an Additional Inspector from Ofsted in October 2000 and the report indicated that, despite a slow start, satisfactory progress was being made. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the percentage of good teaching has

increased. The serious weaknesses found in 1999 were centred around poor administration and financial controls and a lack of response to audit recommendations by the headteacher and governors. In these specific areas, good progress has been made. Good administrative systems are now in place and audit recommendations have been implemented. The school development plan, which was also criticised, is a much better document as it provides a clear direction for the school. Governors are more actively involved in the work of the school now that they receive regular information from the headteacher. They are better informed and are well supported by the local authority which provides valuable advice and guidance. The school is well placed to build on the good progress it has made so far.

STANDARDS

By the time children leave nursery, the majority have made good progress towards achieving national standards, known as the Early Learning Goals, which they are expected to reach at the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement because most children arrive in nursery with levels of attainment that are below average. They make slower progress in improving their skills in writing. This is because they have too few opportunities to practise and consolidate what they have learnt. Children who have special educational needs make good progress when their achievements are compared to what they managed previously. Those learning English as an additional language make similarly good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children are happy at school and participate eagerly in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and children understand teachers' high expectations. Lunchtimes are very orderly and children are very well behaved during visits around the local community.
Personal development and relationships	Warm relationships exist between all members of the school community. Children are quick to help classmates and chat easily to staff and visitors.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Punctuality is still a problem for some families.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Six per cent of the teaching is very good, fifty eight per cent is good and the other thirty six per cent, satisfactory. The quality of teaching has been improved since the last inspection with a greater proportion of high quality lessons. Staff plan most lessons well and make good use of the resources available, particularly the newly developed outdoor area. They also make good use of the local environment to make the learning interesting and relevant by taking children on walks in the area. They meet children's individual needs well and set them tasks at the right level. The quality of the teaching is consistent across most areas of the curriculum but there are some weaknesses. Occasionally, the pace of some activities is too slow and learning opportunities are missed when activities last too long.

Most of the teaching of literacy and numeracy is successful. Staff use a good range of strategies which meet the needs of nursery age children. A good example of this was seen when an adult began a session by practising counting the number of children who were in the group, adding and subtracting as they moved around. However, not enough emphasis is placed on children's writing and this is a weakness. Children who have special educational needs are well taught. Staff provide good opportunities for these children to work towards the targets set for them within their individual plans. A similarly high standard of teaching is provided for children who are learning English as an additional language. Lessons are well organised and staff ensure that all members of the group, whatever their needs, can get full access to the nursery curriculum. They make good progress as a result of the teaching they receive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all the children. The planning is good. It is thoughtfully considered and provides children with a good range of stimulating, challenging learning experiences but not enough emphasis is placed on improving children's writing skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. Children's individual needs are carefully assessed and planned for. Effective support and good teaching enable the children to achieve well. They make good progress when compared to what they had achieved previously.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The children make good progress and they are encouraged and supported effectively by all the staff. The children experience the full curriculum range.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision overall is made for children's personal development. Early experiences in the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are sensitively encouraged through interesting, well planned experiences. Cultural aspects are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring children's welfare, health and safety are good. Very detailed assessment records ensure staff have a very clear understanding of what children can do. Provision is very good.

The school works hard to establish and maintain good links with parents. It is successful in this area.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and staff have created a positive ethos and work well as a team. The school development plan is a very good document. It sets out the future direction of the school. Monitoring of the teaching and the work children undertake is good. The headteacher has worked hard to improve the provision in this area and she has been successful.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils all its statutory responsibilities and has a good knowledge and understanding of the school's needs and priorities. It works effectively with the headteacher and staff to promote the school and is very well supported in its work by officers of the Local Authority.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school collects detailed information about the progress of individual children and uses this information effectively to check on how successful it has been.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources. The school does not have a delegated budget but looks for value for money when making spending decisions.

Staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the children. Accommodation is adequate for the numbers of pupils on roll and the outdoor area is a spacious and well used resource. Resources for learning are satisfactory and are generally well organised. This helps children to learn how to select equipment for themselves.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school. • They behave well and are kind and considerate. • They make good progress. • The school provides a good amount of information which helps parents feel involved. • Cultural differences are valued and celebrated. • Staff are approachable and friendly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One parent felt that problems were not always dealt with in a satisfactory manner.

Parents would feel confident about approaching the school with questions or problems.	
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The inspection findings confirm the parents' overwhelmingly positive views about the school. Children enjoy coming and they make good progress when they are there. It is a happy school where children from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds work and play well together. Good quality support is offered to all children and the school keeps parents well informed about their progress. It does this through regular feedback, written reports and parents' meetings. The school has established a good partnership with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children arrive in nursery with a wide range of pre-school experiences. The majority enter with standards that are below average when compared to children of a similar age. This is particularly true in their personal, social and emotional development and in their linguistic skills. Standards on entry to school are similar to those found during the last inspection.

2. All children, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning during their time at Abercromby nursery. In most areas of learning, children are well on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals which are the standards they are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. The only exception is in their writing. Not enough emphasis is placed on this aspect and, as a result, the standards are not high enough.

3. Improvements have come about for a number of reasons. The leadership and management is more effective and teachers' planning is more detailed. It makes it clear what they want children to learn and children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves. More emphasis is now placed on checking how successful the teaching has been, assessing children's progress and then making changes where necessary.

4. The majority of the children's attainment in personal, social and emotional development is in line with the expected national standard. They make good progress in this area during their time in nursery. Children are confident and eager to try new activities and experiences. They are friendly and speak readily to both adults and children. They plan their activities at the start of the day, work with a sense of purpose and handle equipment and materials with care. They behave well and play happily together readily, for example, taking turns on the computers and sharing the Bob the Builder hats, spades and wheelbarrows fairly. Most children are courteous and polite and say "please" and "thank you" at lunchtime. Here they make sensible choices, such as whether they would like chocolate pudding and cream or yoghurt.

5. Improving most aspects of children's language and literacy skills is given a high priority within the nursery. Children listen well in all situations and generally respond positively when asked to do something. For example, explaining what they have heard in a story. Their vocabulary increases as a result of the good support they receive from all the adults who work with them. Children like reading, often choosing books spontaneously and taking them to share with their friends in the library area. They treat them properly and turn the pages carefully. A small number of higher attainers can describe the part played by authors and illustrators in creating books. Some children make good attempts at writing their own names but not enough emphasis is placed on this aspect. They have too few opportunities to practise their skills.

6. Mathematics work features prominently and the school works hard to introduce it into many of the curriculum areas. Children's skills are developing well with most of them able to count to ten and a few counting much higher than this. They are given regular opportunities to reinforce their skills in this area. A good example of this was seen when children counted out, with their teacher, the number in their group at registration time. A feature of their work

is the way in which they can apply their knowledge in practical situations. Many were able to recognise mathematical shapes when they went on an environmental walk, spotting triangles, squares and rectangles in the architecture around them.

7. Children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is on line to reach the expected standard by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. They have a good understanding of their local area and can talk about many of its features, for example the nearby cathedral and city centre. They know how to design and construct models following a plan and link their work well to topics they are looking at such as bridges. Teachers plan a good range of activities which ensure that children are introduced to simple scientific processes. They can observe living things and talk about what they have seen, picking out similarities and differences. Children's attainment in information and communication technology is good. They are confident when they use computers, selecting different screens and choosing their own programs.

8. Standards in physical development are in line with the expected national standard. Children are skilful at using tools such as pencils, paintbrushes and felt pens to make models and collage pictures. Some children can control the cursor on the computer, activating objects around the screen. All have a good awareness of space and others as they move around the nursery and when they go into the corridor to get their coats. Outdoors, they pedal and steer tricycles and push and pull wheeled toys along the painted routes and paths. They balance along raised bars and walk along the variety of raised bridges with confidence. Others can throw and kick balls successfully to each other.

9. Standards in creative skills are in line with the expected national standard. Children explore and make good use of their imagination by using a variety of materials such as paint, clay, dough and collage. All play in the home corners with great enthusiasm, for example, as family members getting up in the morning preparing breakfast and going out shopping. They enjoy music, singing tunefully and playing musical instruments with enthusiasm to the well-known songs they are taught.

10. Children who have special educational needs learn at a good pace when compared to their previous achievements. Their individual needs are being well met. They receive good support from all the staff who work with them. Children learning English as an additional language are making progress at a similar rate. Staff make good provision by ensuring they are able to take part in the full curriculum range. Every opportunity is taken to practise their language skills.

11. A small proportion of children are higher achievers, particularly in their ability to express themselves. They are similarly well supported because staff think carefully about the questions they ask and make sure each child is given work that is hard enough. For example, they are encouraged to work out simple mathematical calculations or give detailed descriptions of their planned activities for each session.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Children show good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They are quick to settle at the start of a session and happily wave goodbye to their parents. They participate eagerly in the interesting variety of activities offered by staff and persevere well with tasks until they are complete. This helps them to gain the maximum benefit from each activity. Many are able to sustain independent activities for extended periods without any direct adult intervention and this improves their self-confidence. For instance, a group of girls and boys spent some time "working" in the café they created at the water table. Each

child kept to their designated role – waitress, chef, cashier and they worked very well together as a team.

13. Standards of behaviour are good and reflect the consistently high expectations of staff. Children have a good grasp of these high expectations and most live up to them throughout the day. They know when to talk and when to listen and already have a clear understanding of what is right or wrong. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion for everyone as adults and children share food around the small tables. Children consolidate their range of social skills over lunch and know how to behave appropriately at the table. Children respond very well outside the school environment, on walks in the locality, for example. They stay with their adult companions throughout and are rarely distracted from their observational tasks. The well-ordered learning environment allows children to make the most of the time they spend at school and to make consistent progress.

14. The quality of relationships throughout the school is good, both between classmates and children and their teachers. This ensures that children look forward to coming to school and are happy to see their friends, both adults and classmates. Children are comfortable in the presence of adults and chat happily to the staff, knowing that their opinions are valued.

15. Children's personal development is good and many of them display increasingly mature responses to questions and activities. They take tasks seriously as, for example, during the walk around the community when they conscientiously looked for different types of holes in fencing, street furniture and leaves. Each child is encouraged to plan the activities they wish to undertake at the start of the day. This helps them to think about what they like to do and how they are going to spend time in a particular area of the school. Many children can dress themselves independently and all serve themselves at snacktime. They cope well with cutlery at lunchtime and observe common courtesies. Many are kind to each other and immediately offer help when someone is hurt or upset. During one outside activity, a little girl fell over; although she thought about crying for a moment, her friend distracted her by crouching down and giving her a big hug, saying, "You're alright. Come on, let's go inside".

16. Levels of attendance are satisfactory although not all children attend regularly. The poor punctuality of some children was identified as an issue at the time of the last inspection and some problems continue. However, the school has implemented useful monitoring systems that highlight any attendance or punctuality concerns. These are tracked by an educational welfare officer working with the Local Education Action Zone (EAZ). This additional support is beneficial for several families and underlines the importance of establishing good attendance patterns from the earliest age. As a result of these measures, more children are brought to school on time.

HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, the quality of the teaching is good. Six per cent of the lessons observed were judged to be very good, fifty eight per cent of lessons were good and the remaining thirty six per cent were satisfactory. This is a better picture than when the school was last inspected. It has improved for a number of reasons. Tasks set for the children are well organised and the planning is more detailed. Monitoring of teaching and learning is better now that the headteacher goes about it in systematic way.

18. Staff know the children well and have a good knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of young children. They focus their attention on developing language

skills, particularly speaking and listening, which they achieve successfully. They do this by skilful questioning and by introducing new words linked to what the children are doing. For example, they incorporate the chosen topic, "Holes and Bridges", into many aspects of the curriculum, emphasising the links in learning by choosing storybooks that are relevant. Most activities are well organised and the teaching caters for children of all levels of attainment. As a result, children learn faster and the majority of sessions move at a brisk pace. An example of this was seen during a practical activity when children were planning their work for the day. Children were expected to make decisions for themselves and, with sensitive encouragement from the adult, most achieved this. They were asked to justify their choices and share their ideas with classmates. The adult made sure that no one felt vulnerable or lacked confidence because she asked the questions at just the right level.

19. A small number of the children demonstrate challenging patterns of behaviour and most staff manage them well. They organise activities that keep them interested and actively involved throughout.

20. Examples of good quality teaching are found in most areas of children's learning. This degree of consistency improves children's learning opportunities because it means there is always a wide range of interesting and worthwhile activities available for them to choose from. It is only on a few occasions that the quality of the teaching does not meet these high standards, although it is still satisfactory. Teaching of children's writing does not feature prominently enough in lessons and activities. For example, children are not always encouraged to try to write their own names on their work and insufficient opportunities are provided for children to record what they have done. As a result, children get few chances to practise and improve their skills in writing and this slows their progress. In some lessons, learning opportunities are missed and the pace of the activity is too slow. An example of this is snack time when adults do not always engage the children in conversation or try to extend their vocabulary. On another occasion, an interesting mathematics activity which encouraged children to match shapes and colours lasted too long. The pace was not fast enough to retain the initial interest and some of the children gave up and moved away.

21. Staff generally make good use of available resources to support their teaching. This is particularly true of the outside play area and the home corner, both of which are very well used to improve children's language skills. Adults regularly organise the equipment in such a way that it provides a very good stimulus for children's play. For example, the wide range of household furniture was well used to recreate a family atmosphere. This allowed adults to initiate conversations about family and friends.

22. Children who have special educational needs are well taught. They have a detailed plan which sets out targets for them to work towards. Staff use these plans when organising activities and skilfully ensure that no one is left out. They set tasks which build children's confidence and encourage them to take on new challenges. For example, during a language activity, one boy, who had behavioural problems, found difficulty in working with other group members. The adult working with him showed great patience and supported his attempts to relate to others whilst making sure he did not have an adverse effect on their learning. She offered ideas and suggestions but was firm and insistent when necessary. The boy recognised the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, conformed and benefited from the tasks set.

23. Children learning English as an additional language are equally well supported, have full access to all lessons and make good progress during their time in nursery. The support they are offered comes from school staff who know them well and who make sure that questions they are asked are suitably matched to their individual language needs and their

levels of confidence. A good example of this was seen during a practical activity. An adult, working with a boy who had poor language skills, patiently explained what he was expected to do, demonstrated the task and stayed with him until he completed it successfully.

24. Staff made good use of links with parents to support and extend children's learning. For example, parents are sent information about topics children are covering in school and they are encouraged to follow up some of the ideas at home.

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

25. The school has a well balanced curriculum. It provides a good range of stimulating, practical activities both indoors and out which meets the needs of all the children.

26. The school has made good progress in addressing the curriculum issues raised by the previous inspection and has maintained the strengths identified at that time.

27. Curriculum documentation has improved since the last inspection. All policies and schemes of work are in place and are based on the Early Learning Goals. Policies and schemes of work contain the appropriate detail of clear aims, strategies, activity ideas and assessment and recording procedures. These documents ensure that the curriculum is covered in a very thorough manner because both classes follow them.

28. Curriculum planning is good. Following the last inspection, the school has reviewed all stages of its planning and it is now linked to the Early Learning Goals. The curriculum is covered through the use of interesting and challenging school topics such as 'patterns' and the current topic 'holes and bridges'. All staff, including the job share teachers and nursery nurses are involved in planning the curriculum which provides a clear structure for the organisation and management of the nursery. The six areas of the curriculum are planned in detail identifying, for example, what they want children to learn and who will be helping them. There is a good balance between those activities which children choose for themselves and those led by adults.

29. The school has effective strategies for teaching most of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. All activities are well planned to engage the interests of the children and to challenge them to use their knowledge and skills to extend their learning. However, the teaching of children's writing skills is not emphasised enough throughout the nursery. For example, adults often write children's names on their work instead of encouraging them try to write it themselves. During activity time, children are not always actively encouraged to use the writing areas productively. There are few examples of children's written work on display around the nursery.

30. The school takes considerable care over how the learning activities are presented to the children. The curriculum areas are well organised and well equipped with suitable resources and learning materials. Learning activities are well grounded on detailed information about each child. The school regularly assesses what children know, understand and can do, and uses this information to plan future work at the right level. Staff take great care to ensure that the needs of all the children are taken into account when they plan activities. For example, more able children were asked to remember what number they had been given at the start of the day and then show and tell others what it was before lunch time.

31. Frequent opportunities are provided throughout the day for all children to make choices, take decisions and develop as independent learners. Both boys and girls are treated as

individuals and care is taken to make sure that they become fully involved. For example, children's use of the computer is regularly monitored and recorded. This careful recording ensures that the children benefit from all activities, being guided by an adult to any areas they have missed.

32. The school makes good provision for all the children with special educational needs. Some children's special needs are already identified before they start at the nursery through the very good links the school has developed with local agencies. Adults know the children well and any giving cause for concern are quickly identified. Appropriate work is planned for them and the sensitive support the children receive ensures they can all take part in their chosen activities and have equal opportunities in all aspects of the curriculum. The children's progress is regularly reviewed and they all make good progress towards the targets set in their individual educational plans.

33. The provision for children learning English as an additional language is good. Staff are very aware of the differing needs of these children and help them gain confidence to communicate with both adults and other children. Good support by the staff, for example, in explaining instructions carefully and giving some children plenty of time to answer questions, ensures all can take part in their chosen activities and have equal opportunities throughout the nursery.

34. The school continues to make good use of the local community facilities to support and extend children's learning. A walk through the neighbourhood to the Cathedral grounds, for example, to look at the large hole where sandstone had been excavated, was well used to illustrate the current topic of holes and bridges. Recent visitors to the school include fire fighters and policemen who came to school to talk about their role in the community. All these visitors and experiences broadened and enriched the children's learning.

35. The school is successful in establishing good links with partner schools and colleges. Through the Educational Action Zone, the nursery has close links with other nurseries and schools in the area. For example, colleagues meet together at shared courses and forums to improve and develop their work with young children. Although the children transfer to many different schools, the good links between staff ensure communication is positive. The school sends a comprehensive record for each child to the transfer school which helps the move to go smoothly. Good links exist with the colleges of further education; pupils and students attend the school on work placements and they make a positive contribution to the children's learning.

36. Overall, the school makes good provision for children's personal development. Provision for children's spiritual development is good. This is an improvement from the last inspection when the spiritual aspect was sometimes under emphasized. The nursery environment is a place where awe and wonder is a continual feature of every day. The nursery provides many planned opportunities for children to reflect and value the world around them. They are taken on walks, for example, and stop and listen to the absolute quiet in the neighbouring grounds. All marvel that they cannot hear any sounds of traffic, only the sound of birds. Adults use spontaneous moments well to develop a sense of awe and wonder. For example, a group of children gathered round to watch a wood louse moving across the nursery floor. All watched carefully and protected it from harm. They discussed how to treat insects and bugs and took it carefully outside to rest. Children are encouraged in small group time to discuss their feelings, such as, what makes them happy and contributed to a class book called "Feeling Happy".

37. Provision for children's moral and social development is good. All adults in the school reinforce high expectations of honesty and fairness in all aspects of nursery life and children quickly develop a clear idea of right and wrong. They are encouraged to tell the truth and to respect each other and take good care of belongings. All are taught to behave with self control, to be courteous and have good manners. At the start of the day children sing 'The Friendship Song' which encourages them to work together in a happy, friendly manner. The importance of listening to one another is emphasised and, as a result, children listen well, respecting what others have to say and patiently waiting their turn. Children are taught to be tolerant of the difficulties of others and many children play sensitively with those less fortunate than themselves, allowing them to have the favourite animals in the water tray, for example. Children are given responsibilities, such as planning their work for the day. They select the areas they wish to work in and choose the activities and resources. All understand that it is necessary to clear away before lunch and at the end of the day and most children replace resources correctly on the shelves and in containers.

38. Provision for children's cultural development is very good. Children are provided with a wide range of cultural experiences which help them to reflect on their own culture as well as developing knowledge of the culture of others. Visitors and parents wearing traditional dress are invited into school to help children celebrate festivals and special days. For example, parents make a Chinese banquet for the children and help them make a Chinese dragon to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Other parents make special food for an Eid party and decorate the classrooms with paper chains to celebrate the festival. Children have opportunities to learn and participate in traditional songs and ring games, such as 'London Bridge is falling down' and the 'Hokey Cokey'. There is a very good range of musical instruments from other cultures, as well as dual language books, labels in both English and Arabic and many other resources to support this provision.

39. Standards in these areas are similar to those found when the school was last inspected.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school provides good pastoral care and parents are appreciative of the efforts of the Headteacher and the staff.

41. Child protection procedures are effective and ensure that all staff are aware of the school's systems. The teacher designated responsible for child protection works closely with the headteacher and outside support agencies are involved when appropriate. The headteacher makes time to support vulnerable families whenever necessary and this help is valued by parents.

42. Issues of health and safety are carefully addressed and the school is conscientious in its duty of care. Fire drills are regularly practised and there are thorough evacuation procedures in place to cover what to do should an emergency situation develop outdoors. Supervision of children is generally good. However, there are occasions when children can play out of sight in the outdoor area and staff are not always deployed to best effect.

43. Effective procedures are in place to promote good behaviour in the children. The school communicates its policies clearly to parents and children understand how they should behave. This ensures that the school functions as a calm and orderly learning environment where little disruption occurs during activities and children can make the most of their time in school.

44. The school has adopted good systems to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Since the last inspection, the school has been able to take advantage of additional support from the local EAZ in the form of a link educational welfare officer. She visits regularly and is able to follow up any concerns about attendance or punctuality highlighted by the headteacher. This partnership works well as more children are brought to school on time. A few parents are persistently late but this is sometimes unavoidable and the reasons are known to the headteacher.

45. Assessment procedures in school are very good. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have been very carefully analysed and addressed by the headteacher. Staff have a very clear picture of what each child can do and what they need to do next to improve. The headteacher has introduced a number of new systems to ensure that sufficient detail is collated that relates to each child throughout their time at the school.

46. Children's records are detailed and regularly maintained; they provide a wealth of annotated written, pictorial and photographic evidence of what each child can do in each area of learning. The headteacher monitors children's work and teachers' assessments of this work very closely and is quick to pick out any areas where coverage is uneven or where the picture is unclear. Staff are able to plan appropriately for each child as a result and there is a greater consistency of provision across both classrooms. Key workers are very familiar with all aspects of each child's development and this helps them to offer appropriate support and guidance. Parents are given free access to children's portfolios of work and records of achievement during the year and they have a clearer understanding of what their children can do. They also receive a copy of the end of year, written assessments that are sent to primary schools when children move into full time education.

47. Assessment procedures have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now a strength of the school's provision. The other positive aspects of the school's pastoral provision have been maintained at similarly high standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents express very positive views about the school and place great value on the support they receive from the headteacher.

49. The school works hard to establish and maintain effective links with parents. Home visits are offered to parents of new children to the school but these have not been taken up recently. The headteacher greets children at the door as they arrive at the start of the day and parents appreciate this, as she is immediately available to them. Staff are pleased to see the children and strike up a very positive rapport, both with children and their parents. The school considers the home school relationship to be very important and parents are encouraged to come in as often as possible. The school brochure is well written and provides a good overview of the school. Newsletters provide regular information for parents and there is much informal daily contact about what children are doing. The very well considered parental involvement policy illustrates how much consideration has been given to the aspects of school in which parents can be involved. Parent packs also provide very useful information that helps parents and carers to support children's learning.

50. Clear and detailed information is given to parents about how well their children are progressing during their time at the school. They have daily access to general portfolios and files and also see children's independent assessment sheets twice yearly. There is an

automatic expectation from the staff that parents will be equally involved in compiling this information and they meet regularly with parents to ensure this happens.

51. Parents are keen to be involved in their children's education and appreciate the good quality information they receive. They feel very well informed about what their children are learning and the progress they make. A few parents are able to help in school but the majority have other young children or commitments outside the home that preclude them from offering regular help in school. Some have attended adult learning courses over the past year and more are planned. Overall, parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning.

52. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection; home-school relationships are still a strong aspect of the school's provision and have a positive impact on children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The overall leadership and management have shown considerable improvements since the last inspection when serious weaknesses were found. These include the setting of clear aims for the school that are seen in practice and the effective organisation and deployment of resources. The headteacher has responded well to the weaknesses identified when the school was last inspected and introduced the necessary changes. For example, she ensures that governors are now kept well informed about the work of the school. She is hardworking and very supportive of all staff members, ensuring that everyone is able to make a contribution to decisions that are made. An example of this is seen in the way in which everyone is able to contribute to decisions on the school's current priorities. Parents are given an opportunity to comment and many of them offer written feedback. Their views and those of other partners within the school then feature within the school development and improvement plan. This is a much stronger document than when the school was last inspected. Priorities are accurately costed, a sensible timescale is agreed and the plan provides suitable guidance for school improvement.

54. There is a very positive ethos within the school that is geared towards providing good educational opportunities for the children and offering them a safe and secure environment. The school's aims and values are regularly reviewed and can be seen in its life and work. Good examples of these aims, seen in practice, are the way in which staff and children show care and consideration for one another.

55. Systems for monitoring the teaching and learning were heavily criticised when the school was last inspected. Very good progress has been made in these areas. The headteacher is actively involved with planning and organising the curriculum. This produces a greater consistency of approach on most occasions. She works alongside colleagues and offers guidance which helps to ensure that agreed procedures are put into practice. A good example of this is seen in the way in which children's records are carefully monitored. Detailed written feedback is offered which shows where there are gaps in coverage or where written comments on the work are not sufficient. She also monitors the teaching and provides colleagues with valuable feedback.

56. The governing body fulfils all its statutory responsibilities and the criticisms made following the last inspection have been remedied. For example, individual governors visit regularly, committees have been established and meet when necessary and the group has more input into the school development plan.

57. Communication systems within the school are good. It works hard to respond to local needs, consulting parents, listening to their views and responding to suggestions. Staff are friendly and approachable, confirming the very positive views expressed by parents at their meeting with inspectors and in their written responses. Day to day financial control and administration were found to be poor during the last full inspection. These weaknesses have been successfully addressed. The school operates efficiently with responsibility for the administration shared between the school secretary and the headteacher. The school does not have a delegated budget and most financial resources are allocated by the local authority. Nevertheless, all funds are regularly audited and the most recent audit reports suggest the systems are secure with no significant weaknesses.

58. There are a number of reasons why the serious weaknesses have been successfully overcome. The headteacher has responded positively and has worked hard to make sure the key issues have been addressed. She has been well supported by the governing body which, in turn, has benefited from very good advice from the clerk to the governors. In addition, the local authority, which was described as being slow to provide the necessary advice and support after the inspection, is now much more effective. A headteacher mentor has been provided who has helped the school to focus on the identified priorities and support from the link adviser has been crucial in delivering the “critical friend” role.

59. There are suitable numbers of well qualified and experienced staff to teach the children. Funds allocated to special needs are well used. Children receive a good level of support that allows them to access the full curriculum range. Similarly, children learning English as an additional language are equally well supported although, currently, no additional resources are made available and so any help is offered by school based staff. The inspection found that staff working with these groups of children focused accurately on their specific needs and made sure that they were working successfully towards the targets set for them.

60. Resources are adequate for most areas of learning. They are generally well used and thoughtfully organised so that children can choose for themselves, helping them to become more independent. Accommodation indoors is adequate. The outdoor area is attractive and spacious. It has recently been developed to provide a good teaching resource. Deployment of staff needs to be improved so that children are well supervised throughout the school day. There are bushes and shrubs surrounding the perimeter fence where children can be hidden from sight if not carefully supervised. The school works hard to improve the learning environment through displays that celebrate children’s work and achievements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Improve children’s writing skills by:

- Placing a greater emphasis on this aspect.
- Giving children regular opportunities to practise their skills.
- Checking that standards in writing match those found in other areas.
(*paragraphs 2, 5, 20, 29, 70, 105*)

(2) Improve the supervision available for children in the outdoor area by:

- Ensuring that “tidying away” sessions are better organised.
- Checking on levels of supervision, deployment of staff and making sure that children remain in the view of an adult.
(*paragraphs 42, 100*)

- (3) Increase the pace of learning in some lessons by:
- Making sure that activities do not last too long and that children are not kept waiting for activities to begin.
(paragraphs 20, 68, 79, 86, 100, 105)
- (4) Make sure that learning opportunities are not missed by:
- Using snack time more productively to promote children's language skills as well as their personal, social and emotional development.
 - Ensuring children are encouraged to be more independent and that adults do not offer too much support e.g. giving out and collecting equipment, children writing their own name on their work.
(paragraphs 20, 29, 68, 79, 86, 95, 105)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	58	36	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)	55
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	29

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	7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	32798
Total expenditure	28129
Expenditure per pupil	502
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year (standards fund grant)	3000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	52
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	16			3
My child is making good progress in school.	74	13			10
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	3		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	65	16	3	3	3
The teaching is good.	81	13			6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	16		6	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	10	3		3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	19	3		13
The school works closely with parents.	84	16			
The school is well led and managed.	84	16			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	19			3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	87	13			

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

61. Attainment for the vast majority of children in personal, social and emotional development is likely to reach the level expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards are similar to those found when the school was last inspected. This is an area in which the teaching and development of skills are given a very high priority. The staff's high expectations ensure that children of all abilities make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs also make good progress. This is due to the good support they receive from adults within the nursery.

62. The staff have successfully created a happy, purposeful atmosphere where children come into school eager to get on with the day's activities. Children are confident, hang up their coats and hats and greet both adults and other children with pleasure. Some have special friends and welcome others to come and join them in the home corner. They enjoy each other's company and children play well together preparing a birthday party, for example, or taking turns fairly with the Bob the Builder hats, spades and wheelbarrows outdoors.

63. Adults are good role models and constantly reinforce good work habits. Each day, children are involved in planning and selecting the activities they will undertake. Children work with a sense of purpose, persevere and concentrate on their work. When they complete one activity they start the next one without being directed by an adult. They work contentedly individually, in pairs and in small or large groups for activities and stories. They handle equipment and materials with care.

64. All adults in the nursery set high expectations of good behaviour and the children respond well. They understand the rules of the nursery and, with adult help, keep to them. Children know, for example, that if they need to carry a chair to the computer station they must carry it carefully and make sure the legs do not hurt anyone. Every child understands they must not run in the nursery building. The children's behaviour throughout the nursery is good.

65. Children show respect for each other. During group time and 'review time' they listen to what their friends have to say and wait to have their turn. Children show obvious pleasure in friends' successes as well as their own. For example, children showing their drawings illustrating the story of the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" were applauded spontaneously by some of the other children in the group.

66. Lunch times are pleasant occasions and are used well to support children's independence. Here they make sensible choices of what they would like to eat, such as whether they would like chocolate pudding and cream or yoghurt. They make conversation with adults and their friends and behave appropriately at the table.

67. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development was good in over three quarters of the lessons and the rest was satisfactory. Where the teaching is good, teachers and nursery nurses have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They have good relationships with the children and are well aware of their needs. They are patient and kind with the children and give them every opportunity to answer questions and develop confidence. A good example of this was seen when an adult reading a story about

a wriggly worm listened carefully to the children's comments and then phrased each question to suit each individual child. She gave ready praise and encouragement as they answered the questions and joined in the laughter as a child told his humorous story about a worm he had found.

68. Where the teaching is less successful, the pace of children's learning is slow. This happens following outdoor play at lunchtime when children wait on the carpet for everyone in the class to join them and then take time to settle down before listening to the story. Some children sit for a long time in a large group setting, for example, when story time is followed by music time. Children become restless and their pace of learning slows and some opportunities to extend their skills are missed. There are also occasions when adults are only fleetingly involved in activities. Examples of this were seen at the snack table when children sat alone or did not converse with the other children as they ate their biscuits and drank their milk. Opportunities to develop conversation and social skills were not taken.

69. Personal, social and emotional development is integrated into activities planned for all areas of learning. Careful assessments note children's progress so individual needs for support are not overlooked. Work covered in this area of learning makes a strong contribution to the children's success in their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Communication, Language and Literacy

70. Children's attainment in language and literacy is on line to reach the standard expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement because many of the children start nursery with limited language development. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection but writing skills are lower than expected. Not enough emphasis is placed on this aspect of the subject.

71. Most children are able to listen well and this is an aspect which is emphasised. In all groups, they listen attentively to stories, to their classmates' contributions or to the plans that they are making for the day's work. Their ability to listen and respond, given the normal distractions of nursery life, is good. When they come together for group time, these skills are reinforced and practised. For example, they listen carefully to their friends during recall sessions where they describe what activities they have undertaken during a session.

72. By the time children leave nursery, most try to express themselves and they enjoy taking an active part in imaginative play. This is despite the fact that many of the children arrive in school with low levels of language skills. Good levels of adult support build children's confidence and this helps to increase their spoken language skills. For example, a group of children played in the role play area recreating a family scene. They sustained their play for a long time, involved each member of their group, shared resources and took turns. The children negotiated patiently with one boy who insisted everywhere was "too messy" for anyone to come in, as they explained that it "didn't matter". Their language skills improved on these occasions because the adult working with them was able to offer valuable ideas on how their role play might develop. She made sure the activities stayed purposeful and built in links with other curriculum areas. She kept a child with behavioural difficulties fully engrossed so that he could benefit from the language opportunities without affecting the learning of others.

73. Children enjoy using books and they know how to handle them carefully. Many will choose books spontaneously and take them into the library area to read. The school provides an interesting and stimulating literary environment which encourages children to

enjoy and value books. They understand that the words and pictures in the book can convey a meaning to the reader. Most children can recognise their own names and use this skill as they self register each day. At recall time, children talk about books they have enjoyed listening to and can retell their favourite stories. Some higher attainers are able to talk about the writer of a book they know and describe the role undertaken by the illustrator.

74. For most children, their writing skills are at a very early stage of development. Some are confident enough to make attempts at writing their own names unaided and a small number manage to do this but not enough emphasis is placed on this aspect of language and literacy. Too few children write their own names on pieces of work and writing is under represented in the display of children's work around the school. As a result, children's attainment in writing is less well developed than other areas.

75. Children's progress is good. This is primarily because of the good work of the staff. Many of the activities come from children's own interests as they plan what they will do at the start of each day. Staff organise activities well so that children build on what they already know and they have regular opportunities to consolidate their learning.

76. Children who are identified as having special educational needs receive a good level of skilled, adult support. They have individual programmes of work which give them the opportunity to make consistently good progress. They enjoy their work because staff make it interesting and children experience success in what they do. An example of this was seen when a boy who has communication difficulties was able to "clap" the syllables of his name as part of a group activity. His successes were celebrated by the rest of his group. This helped to build his confidence and his contribution was valued.

77. Those children who are learning English as an additional language are also very well supported. Staff ensure they are able to access all parts of the curriculum and take a full and active part in role play. This helps children to practise their emerging speaking skills and gain confidence.

78. The quality of the teaching is good overall. Twenty two per cent of the teaching observed was very good, sixty seven per cent good, with the remainder, eleven per cent satisfactory. Teachers' planning is good. It sets out clearly what the teacher expects children to achieve during an activity and all staff contribute to it. The best lessons are characterised by all group members being stimulated and everyone making good gains in their learning. This was seen during a story session when an adult read a story called, "Don't put your finger in the jelly". Such was the skill and expertise of the teacher that she held the whole group spellbound. For example, pretending to eat the food prepared in the toy kitchen. They listened well, took turns to answer and made good attempts to predict what might happen next in the story. Part of the success of the lesson was due to the high expectations of good behaviour and of the good gains in learning to be made by all the group.

79. Not all the teaching was as good as this, although none seen was judged to be unsatisfactory. In the more ordinary lessons, activities move more slowly and learning opportunities can be missed. An example of this was seen during snack time. Children sat in silence as they ate their snack because the adult working nearby did not engage them in conversation. This meant they missed the opportunity to practise their speech skills and increase their vocabulary. As a result, their rate of learning slowed.

Mathematical Development

80. Overall, children make good progress and most are on course to meet the expected standard by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement because many children arrive in nursery with attainment levels that are below average. Standards are similar to those found when the school was last inspected. On that occasion, children did not choose to use the mathematics activities frequently enough. This weakness has been addressed and mathematics now has a higher profile. For example, staff concentrate on making sure children learn to count and recognise figures and include many opportunities within the topics they choose. They are successful because they practise these skills regularly, helping children to consolidate what they have just learned.

81. Many of the children are still at an early stage of mathematical development but, already, the majority of the children can count to ten and some can count much higher than this. They use their knowledge of number rhymes and counting games to reinforce this learning. This is seen at registration when children were asked to work out how many of their friends were present and how many were absent. Most could count accurately with their classmates and the teacher as far as twenty six, although few were able to achieve this independently. Some higher attainers were able to work out simple sums using these same figures and then apply their knowledge in other situations. For example, working out how many of their friends could join them in the home corner, dependent on the number of places set at the table.

82. The school makes very good use of the local environment to support mathematical learning and, as a result, children are developing a good understanding of shape, space and measure. A good example of this was seen in the newly developed outside area where markings on the play area, such as squares, triangles and rectangles were readily recognised by the children. They can also make comparisons and can recognise bigger and smaller objects around and outside the nursery. Some are beginning to use simple mathematical language as when, for example, they describe the amount of water they have poured into similar containers. They can also identify patterns and recreate some for themselves. For example, in one group the adult worked with a small group trying to complete a jigsaw. Children were able to spot the repeating patterns and explain why the blocks would only fit in one way.

83. Children learn well and they make good progress in their mathematics. Those who are identified as having special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make particularly good progress. This is because they receive a high level of skilled support and most achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans. Their work is very closely monitored and adapted to their needs when necessary. For example, one pupil who found it difficult to share with others was encouraged to count out the toys he had collected as he gave one to each member of his group. As well as learning to count, due to the patience shown by the adult, she made sure that his social and interpersonal skills also improved. Individual records are very detailed and much better than when the school was last inspected. These indicate that the progress children make is consistently good throughout their time in nursery.

84. Most children behave well and are keen to improve. A small number find it difficult to settle to tasks but when they do, they generally work well together, share and take turns. When they are required to work together to complete their tasks, most do so sensibly.

85. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good in forty per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. In the most successful lessons, adults make good links with other activities, such as outdoor play, to improve children's mathematical skills. For example, children were counting the laps they completed while riding bikes or scooters around the

marked track, while another group that was playing football was determined that they would know who was winning. The adult encouraged them to calculate how many goals were needed for both teams to draw level. This increased children's confidence and learning as they applied their mathematical knowledge in practical situations.

86. In the more ordinary lessons, children work productively but some of the tasks last too long and this slows their rate of learning. An example of this was seen when a group were playing a matching and sorting game. They were able to talk about the shapes and colours of the figures they were using but the discussion lasted too long and the adult gave the children many of the answers. The activity lacked pace and children were given too much support.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

87. The majority of children are on course to reach the expected standard by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. They are provided with many good opportunities for learning through well planned classroom activities as well as opportunities to extend what they know through the local environment. Children respond well to these challenges. Standards are similar to those found during the last inspection.

88. Children can talk about simple scientific processes. They learn to observe carefully and describe accurately what they see. For example, in one activity they studied sunflower seeds and discussed why some were growing faster than others. Most realised that light and water were some of the essential ingredients needed if plants were to flourish.

89. The topic covered during the period of the inspection was "Holes and Bridges". Staff encouraged children to link this theme to their construction work with good results. Most children can select construction materials sensibly and safely. They are good at planning what they want to make and know how different materials can be joined, showing good manipulative skills. A good example of this was seen when a small group of children worked hard to build their bridge with large wooden blocks and then joined them with planks. They showed good co-operative skills as they shared the workload and discussed why a solid foundation was so important if their bridge was to fit the purpose.

90. Children are very keen to talk about their family and friends and this is a very positive feature of children's work in this area. They feature regularly in imaginative play with some "mums" being very strict about what they will allow the rest of the family to do in the home corner. Many children can recognise features of their local area and know parts of their address. Their work in this area is particularly effective as they are introduced to features of the local community through well planned environmental walks. On one of these, a small, well supervised group visited the local Anglican Cathedral grounds. They were able to point out where some of their friends lived. Another positive feature is the way in which they are developing an understanding about their own and other people's cultures and beliefs. An example of this is the way that festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Chinese New Year are celebrated.

91. Most children behave well and this has a positive effect on the quality of what they achieve. It is evident in the way they share tools and materials and take turns with equipment. They are comfortable with the routines of the nursery and are keen to talk about their activities with adults.

92. Children confidently use information and communication technology. When working on the computer, they know that moving the mouse will make changes on the screen and

many show competence in selecting from different options. The equipment is very well organised because computers are grouped in each classroom, allowing adults to manage the children working on them more effectively. They get good opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning in this area.

93. All children are making good progress in this curriculum area. The good progress is due to the interesting range of lessons they are offered, which have clear learning objectives and are adapted to meet the needs of individual children. Children who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are especially well supported. This is because staff tailor their work individually, making it manageable and enjoyable.

94. A fifth of the teaching in this area is good, with the remaining four fifths satisfactory. Staff set up activities which are interesting and keep children involved. As a result, they learn more quickly and are able to consolidate their learning through a series of related experiences. A good example of this was seen as a group of children were asked to work out the possible use of some of the holes they spotted during one of their walks. The adult supported their work well, suggesting possible uses but insisting that they observe closely before coming up with some solutions themselves. Most decided, correctly, that small animals were the likeliest occupants of the holes.

95. In the more ordinary lessons, some learning opportunities were missed. During a craft activity, for example, a group of children were creating a picture, sticking, gluing and joining different materials. The adult working with them concentrated on completing the task and gave children few opportunities to discuss what they were doing. They were not encouraged to write their own names on their work.

Physical development

96. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress and most of the children are on course to meet the expected standards by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. This is similar to the last inspection report.

97. Children are given a wide range of activities indoors to develop their physical skills. There are many opportunities throughout the day to develop their manipulative skills. For example, they use pencils, brushes, scissors and tools confidently to make collage pictures and models of rockets. When using computers they manipulate the mouse and move the cursor with accuracy. All have a good awareness of space and each other as they move around the nursery and when they go into the corridor to get their coats.

98. Children play out daily and are provided with a wide range of activities on the playground and the large grassed area. They pedal and steer tricycles and push and pull wheeled toys along the newly painted routes. Some can ride in the correct direction following the arrows and can stop and start at the zebra crossing. Many throw and kick a variety of balls with increasing accuracy. They balance along raised bars with help from an adult or their friends and walk across the variety of raised bridges with confidence.

99. The quality of teaching in over half the lessons is good and the rest is satisfactory. Where the teaching is good, activities are well planned and provide a good level of challenge for the children. Adults manage the activities well with a strong emphasis on the skill to be developed. For example, children making models to develop their manipulative skills were encouraged to knead, roll and cut dough. They were then challenged to mould the dough into a model that had a large hole in it. The adult praised and encouraged them

until they finished the task. Children working at computers are similarly well supported. They are shown how to click the mouse to make the cursor move across the screen to activate the many stages of the programme.

100. Some of the teaching outside is less successful than that indoors. On fine days, children are allowed to use the whole of the large grassed field as well as the playground to develop their physical skills. On a few occasions, the adult roles outdoors become supervisory and not focused on skill development as children move quickly from one activity to another in different parts of this large area. There are also times when some become detached from the main group of children and spend time away from others behind bushes or standing in the outdoor store room unnoticed by adults. Opportunities to develop and extend children's physical skills are missed on occasions such as these. At the end of the session, outdoors, some children clear away quickly but others, further away, continue to play and time is wasted waiting for all the children to collect resources from the large area and replace them in containers before starting the next activity indoors.

101. The school has suitable equipment, both indoors and out, to develop physical skills. The new surface on the playground, with its attractive markings, enhances the provision for children's physical skill development.

Creative Development

102. The children's attainment in this area of learning is in line to meet the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. All groups of children make good progress in improving their imaginative and creative skills. The standard of the previous inspection has been maintained.

103. Children are enthusiastic and keen to become involved in all creative activities, enjoying the freedom to express ideas and feelings. Children explore and make good use of their imagination by using a variety of materials such as paint, clay, dough and collage. They have free access to paint and paper at all times and draw, paint and make models with enthusiasm. Most children use scissors, brushes, spatulas and glue with confidence as they cut and stick assorted paper to make a collage or a model of a rocket. All play in the role play areas, both indoors and out, with great enthusiasm, for example, as family members getting up in the morning, preparing breakfast and then going out shopping. They enjoy music, singing tunefully and beating and shaking musical instruments to the well-known songs they are taught. The good use of voice and demonstration by staff ensures that children using English as an additional language and children with special educational needs can join in the activity and make good progress.

104. The quality of teaching in two thirds of the lessons was good and the rest was satisfactory. Where the teaching is good, activities are suitably prepared, managed and supervised well. In the role play areas, indoors and out, staff are on hand to support the play or intervene sensitively if required. For example, children digging in the field to make a 'roadway' welcomed the adult into the play and careful discussion between the adult and children introduced new vocabulary, extended the play and children's confidence and enjoyment were increased.

105. However, the teaching is less successful when adults give children too much help and support. This happens during music lessons, for example, when children wait to be given instruments by the adult and wait again at the end of the activity as the adult collects them and replaces them on the trolley. The pace of children's learning slows and opportunities for children to develop independence are missed here. Opportunities to develop

independence and practice writing skills are also missed when adults automatically write children's names on pictures and paintings.

106. Resources for creative development are good. There is a wide range of appropriate, attractive, stimulating resources available to all. Children take good care of all resources and some pick up scissors and pencils from the floor and replace them on the table without being prompted.

107. Bold, attractive pictures and photographs of bridges are well displayed around the nursery and stimulate the children to use a wide range of materials to create pictures, paintings and collage. All staff place great value on the children's work.