

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CURZON CRESCENT NURSERY SCHOOL**

Willesden, London

LEA area: Brent

Unique reference number: 101489

Headteacher: Anna Foord

Reporting inspector: Stephen Beaumont  
8440

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 221421

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:	Curzon Crescent London
Postcode:	NW10 9SD
Telephone number:	(0208) 459 6813
Fax number:	(0208) 459 6903
Appropriate authority:	Brent LEA
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Sukhminder Kalsi (Chair of Advisory Body)
Date of previous inspection:	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8440	S Beaumont	Registered inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and Understanding of the world Physical development	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are children taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9537	C Marden	Lay inspector		Children's attitudes, values, and personal development How well does the school care for children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15918	M Goodchild	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Creative development English as an additional language Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other learning opportunities? How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Curzon Crescent nursery school has 55 boys and 49 girls in four classes. It is full, with a waiting list. Children start at the school in the September following their third birthday. All children stay to lunch and attend the morning and afternoon sessions. They leave in the following July and go on to any of 20 local primary schools, having had just one year of nursery education. The school serves a wide range of local families. There is considerable social need, with over half of the children claiming free school meals, which is well above the national average. Families come from a rich variety of cultures; the school positively welcomes this and sees it as an educational advantage. Nearly half of the children are from families of Black African or Black Caribbean backgrounds. There are 12 children from families who are refugees or seeking asylum who have recently come to Willesden. An increasing number of children start at the school but move away because they leave the area. Sixty three children speak English as an additional language and of these 31 are at an early stage of learning it. This is much higher than found in most schools. There are 28 children with special educational needs, but none with a statement. This is broadly in line with the national average. Many children enter the school with skills and knowledge below that expected for children of this age, notably in speaking. Many parents say that they choose the school because they see it as a haven, away from the busy streets, in which the whole child is developed.

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

This is a good school, which has improved greatly over the last two years and is looking to raise standards and the quality of teaching still further. Children leave the school having made good progress and are on course to meet or exceed the expected standards in all areas of learning other than speaking at the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching has improved greatly and is now good. Management is good and there is sound leadership. Although unit costs are high, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teaching is of good quality.
- Children make good progress. They achieve standards well above those expected nationally in personal, social and emotional development and information and communication technology and above those expected in creative development. They are above national expectations in dance.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good because all who work in the school have high and consistent expectations.
- Children feel safe, valued, and well cared for.
- The school uses its very good garden and good indoor accommodation to good effect, which helps children learn.
- There are very good opportunities for staff to develop their own professional skills. This helps to keep staff morale high and develop team work.

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

- Support provided for children with English as an additional language.
- Use of time in the afternoon sessions so as to extend the concentration of children.
- Further use of focused teaching.
- The statement of aims and mission statement of the school to provide a clearer vision as to where it is going.
- The partnership with parents so as to make them more involved with the education of their own children.

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



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected in February 2000, inspectors found serious weaknesses and listed several key issues for action centred around the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of management. A follow up inspection in March 2001 stated that there had been good progress and that each of the key issues had been met fully. There has been continuing progress since this inspection, notably in the further improvement of teaching and the quality of assessing children's skills and understanding and in monitoring their progress. Parents also noted these improvements and also recognised that more apparatus for learning through play had been provided and that there were more computers. The school is in a good position to improve further and is eager to do so.

## STANDARDS

Many children come into the school, soon after they are three, with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. This is most notable in their speaking skills. Over half of the children use their own language at home and nearly a quarter of the children are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Over 20 languages are spoken in families that use the school. In addition, a high number of children talk in English at home but have problems with their speech.

When children leave the nursery, soon after they are four, many are still behind expected levels in speaking and, of these, several are from families where English is not spoken at home. This is because not enough effective support is given to them, especially in the very early stages of learning.

In all other aspects when children leave the school they are on course to reach the learning goals which are expected nationally at the end of the Reception year and in some aspects to be above them. Their personal, social and emotional development is well above expectations for their age. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is in line with that expected of children of their age, but they have skills in information and communication technology well above the expected levels. Children have creative skills beyond those expected nationally. Mathematical skills and understanding are in line with what is expected. Although speaking skills of children with English as an additional language and others who have speech problems are low, other aspects of language and literacy are in line with expected levels.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children enjoy their activities and are eager to succeed. They learn with a smile.
Behaviour	Very good because all adults have consistent and high expectations. Lunchtime behaviour is excellent and sitting down to a shared lunch provides a very good social occasion.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children relate very well to all adults and to each other. They learn to respect each other and there is excellent racial harmony.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Punctuality is generally good.

Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good and this has a very positive effect on the standards they achieve. The school's ethos is one of calm, care and concern and this helps children to develop their personal skills.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
Quality of teaching	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 is of good quality in all classes and this is having a very positive effect on the progress that children make and the standards they reach. The quality of teaching has improved greatly since the inspection in 2000 and has continued to improve since the inspection last year. Inspectors found no unsatisfactory teaching and most teaching was good or better. Teachers and nursery assistants work very well together as a team. Morale is high, staff are confident in the styles of teaching that they use and enthusiastic in their work.

There are particular strengths in teachers' own knowledge of how young children learn. This helps them to plan lessons and activities well so as to meet the needs of children. Teachers and assistants are encouraged to take further courses and to improve their professional skills. All adults have high expectations of children and manage their behaviour very well. Adults observe and assess children's activities carefully and use this information to match work closely to their needs. Planning is very thorough and the quality of learning is evaluated soon after sessions end.

There are weaknesses in some teaching given to children with English as an additional language. This means that their needs are not met and they do not make the progress that they should. Specific focuses for teaching should be extended to involve more direct teaching. The quality of learning is very good in the mornings, but as children get tired this declines. This could be improved if different sorts of activities and groupings were introduced into the afternoon sessions. Overall the quality of learning is good as the school meets children's needs and involves them very actively in their own learning through play and other activities.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Teaching and learning is well planned to cover all that is suggested in the Foundation Curriculum. There are good opportunities for visits to local places of interest and visitors come into the school. This makes learning exciting.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. There is a good mixture of one to one support and working in small groups. Individual education plans are well kept and children reach the targets that are set for them.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Insufficient effective support is given to children with English as an additional language, especially in the early stages of learning, and this means that they do not make enough progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for social and moral development are very good. Cultural development is good and children are learning how to live in the multi-cultural society which surrounds them very well. The school's provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, but opportunities for silence and reflection are sometimes missed.
How well the school cares for its children	The school takes very good care of the children; they feel safe, valued, and supported. 'Key workers' and others observe, assess and record children's development well, helping them make good progress.

The school's links with parents are satisfactory. The school provides much information about what is

going on in the nursery and has a good system of home visits before children start at the school. Good information is given about how children are getting on and staff are always available to parents and carers to share concerns or successes. The learning opportunities given to children are good.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The management provided by the headteacher, deputy head and other teachers with responsibilities is good. All required policies are in place and up to date. There is very good monitoring of the quality of teaching. The headteacher has shown good leadership in moving the school on from the inspection in February 2000 and staff morale is high. The school's aims do not give a clear enough vision for the school's future development and this is a weakness in leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The advisory board is set up as an advisory and consultative group. There is a named officer of Brent Education Authority with responsibility for the school. Although most of the advisory board only serve for one year, they give good support and sound advice. They have no statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The very good monitoring of the quality of teaching, and the rigorous checking on standards by the headteacher and other senior staff, means that the school has a good understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. This is well used in drawing up priorities for the school improvement plan.
The strategic use of resources	The school is very well staffed and resources are good. Very good use is made of the spacious classrooms and very good outdoor areas. The principles of best value are applied and as a result the opportunities for learning are good, and the surroundings stimulating, despite the poor decorative state of some parts of the building.

The school is very well staffed and well resourced and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning and the progress that children make.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• They make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Adults have high expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors endorse the positive views that parents have and these are expanded in the report. They consider that the amount of homework given is appropriate for children of this age, but recommend that the toy and book libraries should be open more often so as to allow further opportunities for parents to work with their own children at home.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Many children come into the school, soon after they are three, with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. This is most notable in their speaking skills. Over half of the children use their own language at home and nearly a quarter of the children are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Over 20 languages are spoken in families that use the school. In addition, a high number of children talk in English at home but have problems with their speech.
2. When children leave the nursery, soon after they are four, many are still behind expected levels in speaking and of these several are from families where English is not spoken at home. This is because not enough effective support is given to them, especially in the very early stages of learning. In all other aspects when children leave the school they are well on course to reach the learning goals which are expected nationally at the end of the Reception year and, in some aspects, to be above them.
3. After children have been in the school for the year, they leave having made good progress. They are well developed for their age socially and emotionally and have good personal skills. It is expected that if progress continues they are likely to be well above what is expected in this aspect when they reach the end of the Reception Year. This is because all adults who work in the school give a high priority to this. All staff have consistently high expectations of how children should behave and relate to each other. Children are taught good manners, are expected to take turns and work together with their friends. They are encouraged to take initiative, choose some activities for themselves and to clear up. All staff work together as a team in which at least one knows the child very well. This system of having a 'key worker' who keeps careful notes of a child's growth and needs is a very positive factor in children's social and personal development.
4. Children gain very good creative skills and again standards are likely to be well above what is expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. Their communication skills, mathematical knowledge and understanding are likely to be in line with what is expected. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is in line with that expected, but many children already have skills in information and communication technology which are beyond those expected at the end of the Reception class, which is still over a year away. Children's physical development is in line with expectations, but they have particularly good skills in dance and here again will achieve at a level beyond that expected nationally.
5. Children with special educational needs are making good progress towards the targets that are set for them. The school is careful to make sure that activities at different levels of difficulty are provided for those slower to learn and for higher attaining children. This keeps children interested and helps them to succeed at their own level and make good progress. The school is careful to check that boys and girls, and children from ethnic minority groups, are fully included in all activities and that they make good progress.

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

6. Children have very good attitudes to learning as a result of the good teaching and consistently high expectations of all who work in the school. All staff have consistently high expectations of children and provide them with a wide range of interesting activities. Consequently children are eager to take part in the activities and want to succeed. Children are able to concentrate well on the activity that they are engaged in and they generally maintain interest, especially during the morning sessions. Most children listen well and respond quickly to any instructions or requests from an adult. In addition, some children are already working independently, collecting their own materials and putting them away.

7. Children behave very well and during lunch their behaviour is exemplary, contributing to their very good personal development. At lunch they sit in small groups and enjoy chatting to each other and the midday supervisors. It is a good social occasion. Children happily wait their turn and use knives and forks well to eat their meal. Children are taught good manners and say please and thank you and this is re-inforced by all adults. In classes the children's good behaviour contributes to the good progress they make.
8. Children have very good relationships with each other and the staff. They usually want to please the adults in the room and show visible pride when the staff praise their work. For example, at the end of the morning session when the teacher celebrated books the children had made during the morning the children's faces lit up. Children generally co-operate together very well and play happily together. They are beginning to see that other people matter and that what they do has an effect on them. The degree of racial harmony is commendable and boys and girls work and play very well together.
9. Attendance is satisfactory with the majority of absence caused by illness.

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

10. Teaching is of good quality throughout the school and this is having a very positive effect on the progress that children make and the standards they reach. The quality of teaching has improved greatly since the inspection in 2000 and has continued to improve since the inspection last year. Inspectors found no unsatisfactory teaching and most teaching was good or better. Teachers and nursery assistants work very well together as a team. Morale is high, staff are confident in the styles of teaching that they use and enthusiastic in their work.
11. The headteacher observes lessons on a very regular basis, gives a written report to the teachers and others involved and suggests where improvements could be made. Co-ordinators for each of the areas of learning do the same every term. This monitoring and critical feedback has had a very positive effect on raising the quality of teaching over the last two years. At the end of each day teachers and assistants discuss how successful activities have been, how children have reacted and what changes need to be made for the following day. Time is used very well during this, with the nursery nurse often preparing materials for the next day whilst the teacher makes notes. This joint planning means that each knows precisely what they will be doing and on which groups they will focus. It also helps to ensure that activities are closely matched to children's needs.
12. Teachers have a good knowledge of how young children learn and they use this well in their teaching. The school puts strong emphasis on professional development and encourages teachers and others to extend their qualifications. Currently at least three members of staff are taking degree or advanced professional courses. This knowledge is shared and is having a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.
13. Teachers plan their sessions well to include a good mix of activities. These include activities which are teacher or other adult led, tasks to which children are directed that are designed to develop particular skills and other activities, which children can choose for themselves. In all of this, children are encouraged to be independent, get what they need for themselves and work alongside others. The garden is very well designed to give very good opportunities for active play and learning. Teachers plan what is set up in the garden very carefully to complement what is being taught indoors. Each week there is a particular focus for learning, which is planned in detail for each day. For instance, a focus on growing things involved examining and sowing seeds. Vocabulary to be taught and suggested activities for children to do centred around the knowledge and understanding that is to be taught are provided for staff to draw out specific learning. Although the introduction of more closely focused work, often including direct teaching in groups, is having a positive effect on standards, it is not yet used enough.
14. Adults manage children's behaviour very well. They expect highly of them and encourage and praise very effectively. Where children present challenging behaviour, all adults act in a consistent and calm manner and try to get the children to see the result of their actions. In larger groups

where this happens another adult quickly supports the child, which means that the learning of others does not suffer. A good example of this was in a story session where one child's actions could have disrupted the atmosphere, but were not allowed to do so. The good joint working of teachers and nursery nurses in all classes is having a very good effect on children's learning. This is seen in group work and in whole class activities.

15. Teachers and other staff generally use questioning well. They are careful to include children of all capabilities. In the best sessions, teachers made sure that questions required more than one word answers and gave children time to think. A good example of this was a teacher working with a group in the sandpit asking, "How else could we make windows in this castle?" After considerable thought a child replied "Instead of putting things on, we could use our fingers to scoop them out". Adults sometimes accept the first answer without asking them to "tell me a bit more", or "can any one else add to that", and this has a negative effect.
16. Teachers keep very detailed records of children's progress based on the observations that they and the nursery assistant make. These assessments are very well recorded and are used to plan work to move the child on to the next stage. The system is manageable and useful in enabling adults to provide activities and set tasks at just the right level. It helps adults to know the children well and to report accurately to parents about how they are getting on.
17. Although the school sees the teaching of children with English as an additional language as a priority, too little additional support is given in the early stages of learning. In some cases, where small group support is given, the quality of teaching and the model of language provided are unsatisfactory. The teaching given to children with special educational needs is good.
18. Generally the variety and balance of activities which are provided is good. However, it is noticeable that many children get very tired during the afternoon sessions. This is unsurprising, as all children are full time and some have been in school since 8 am. It means that children's concentration and motivation decline and the quality of their learning drops. Different groupings and activities, using the particular skills of teachers, are not used enough during afternoon sessions to counteract this. Some excellent whole class dance sessions held during the mornings would have been better placed in the afternoon, with perhaps one teacher taking different classes in turn.

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

19. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities that support good achievement in most areas of learning. There has been very good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection, brought about partly by the national introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'stepping stones' that guide teachers in preparing children for meeting the early learning goals by the age of five. The Foundation Stage curriculum was very carefully introduced and combined with thorough staff development.
20. Curricular planning is good. The school has made very good use of the national guidance in its long, medium and short-term planning and in the expectations teachers convey to children and parents. It has integrated topic work effectively with the Foundation Stage curriculum and is careful in its planning so that work is matched to children's personal readiness for particular activities at various points in the year. Staff use the 'stepping stones' well in their planning and in the records they keep about children's progress – which are therefore sufficiently focused to plan what is to be taught next. Most 'stepping stones' are well catered for; some in literacy and mathematical development need further attention in order to extend children's attainment in these areas. The introduction of focused activities, with adult support, has improved provision; more activities of this type and more whole class sessions would stimulate further children's learning and development.
21. The curriculum provides well overall for higher attaining children who are identified and given some experiences to extend their learning, equally well for boys and girls and for those with special educational needs. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities and the wide range of

- activities and high adult to child ratio meet most children's needs well. However, provision for children who are at early stages in learning English is underdeveloped. The school has come some way towards improving the teaching of communication and language through its successful bid for money to employ an inclusion worker, but there is a significant amount of work still to do to ensure the curriculum fully meets the needs of this group of children.
22. The school has good developing links with its community and well-established links with partner educational establishments. A link with the local church has been established and the school takes gifts for the homeless to the church at harvest time. There is good liaison with the primary schools to which children transfer after their fourth birthday. All children have the opportunity to visit the school they are moving to and staff liaise with Reception class teachers about the attainment they expect by the time children move to primary school. Liaison is further fostered by the deputy headteacher's regular attendance at meetings of other deputies in the local authority. The school has links with local secondary schools through pupils coming to do work experience in the nursery. It also has links with the College of North West London, from which students come to train.
  23. A good range of outings enriches the curriculum. In the early part of the children's year in the nursery, they are taken on visits to places close to the nursery to build up their confidence. These include the local market, the Hindu temple, the local church, the post office, a garden centre and the local park. Later in the year, when they have developed greater confidence, they go on trips to places such as the Science Museum, London Zoo and Sion Park. A small number of children attend the breakfast club or the after school club.
  24. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, whilst their personal progress is fostered very well through the emphasis all staff place on personal, social and emotional development. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There are instances where children's spiritual development is fostered in class, for example, in work children did on sources of light where they were made aware of light shining through fabric and exposed to shimmering materials that caught the light. However, opportunities for reflection and wonder are not built into the planned curriculum. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Staff are consistent in their expectations and make sure children know right from wrong. They encourage them to think about their actions and show consideration for others. The consistency with which all staff manage children's behaviour makes a major contribution to their moral development. The many opportunities for children to play together and the way they are encouraged to be friendly to one another supports their social development. Lunchtimes play a very important part in their socialisation: they are important social occasions when children learn how to relate politely with others in a group. Provision for cultural development is good, with an appropriate emphasis on multicultural awareness. Displays around the nursery represent a wide range of cultures in an attempt to make all children feel included and valued. Children have made paper dragons for Chinese New Year and attempted to make marks suggestive of Chinese calligraphy. Photographs of black role models are on display and Irish dancers visited the school on St Patrick's Day. Parents regard it as a particular strength that the nursery celebrates and shares the different cultures in the school community. A range of festivals is celebrated and the school seeks help from parents in this.

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

25. All staff care for children very well. Attendance of children is carefully monitored and any unnotified absences are rigorously followed up. Staff are very adept at managing behaviour. They have high expectations of how children should behave and are quick to respond to any minor incidents that they then use effectively to develop children's moral understanding. A good example of this was where an adult had to intervene and persuade a child to share the blocks he was using and encouraged the other to thank him for this. The few more serious incidents are recorded by the headteacher, as are any racial incidents.
26. There are very good procedures for dealing with any child protection concerns and staff are made aware of these through the staff handbook and staff meetings. The headteacher is the designated teacher responsible for child protection. The school takes health and safety issues very seriously.

The site manager has compiled a very thorough health and safety manual and informs staff of any new information about health and safety issues. As a result of this the school bought desert hats for all the children to protect them from the sun. Children feel safe and well cared for and this helps them to learn. Each child has a 'key worker' and this helps in providing continuing care.

27. The school has made very good progress since the inspection in 2000 in recording children's progress and the assessment procedures are now good. Teachers have developed a manageable and useful system of observing the levels children are working at and recording their progress. They use this information well to plan the next activities. Their progress is carefully tracked against the 'stepping stones' of the foundation stage.

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

28. Parents are highly satisfied with what the school provides. In particular they feel that the teaching is good and that teachers have high expectations of their children. This leads to children making good progress and behaving well. In addition all the parents that replied to the questionnaire said their children enjoyed school. The one area that parents are less pleased with is homework. The inspection team supports the positive views of parents but found that teachers use homework well, particularly in relation to the age of the children.
29. The school values the contribution parents make to the education of their children. Displays outside the classrooms provide good information about what the children are learning that week. Good displays showing children's work linked to a specific 'stepping stone' gives parents a clear idea of the level pupils are working at. Information about children's progress through annual reports, consultation meetings each term and informal discussions with staff is good. The written reports give parents clear statements about what their children can do and understand. However, there is little information about the progress children have made over the year and how their standard of work compares with what is expected of children of their age nationally. The system of home visits provides a good introduction to the school and establishes positive links with parents and carers.
30. The school has satisfactory links with parents. These links are still developing. Parents use the family room for the course that is helping them to support their children's learning. In addition there is a computer available for parents to use, with access to the Internet. A parent has recently initiated coffee mornings to bring parents together. The family room is not fully used and the school could use this room more effectively to help parents become more fully involved in the life of the school. For example, providing English support groups for those parents who have English as an additional language.
31. The school invites parents to celebrations of different religious festivals. Parents are very supportive of events in the different multicultural weeks the school holds. For example, during African week parents dress in national costume and bring in African food as well as telling traditional African stories. The school encourages parents to help on a more regular basis and a few come in to read stories and help in the classroom. One parent, whose child has now left, was observed working with children to very good effect and giving them the experience of his musical and story telling skills. Parents have a satisfactory impact on the life of the school through the advisory body and by taking their concerns to the headteacher.

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

32. The headteacher has provided good leadership in moving the school from a position of serious weaknesses at the time of the inspection in 2000 to a situation where provision is now good. Notable improvements have been made in the quality of teaching and the management of the school. Staff morale is high and there is a strong, shared commitment to improving further. Teamwork is strong and all staff show confidence that the school is moving in the right direction. There is no governing body, but the advisory body fulfils its role of providing advice and support. Its members are kept well informed and appropriately involved. The headteacher and advisory body

provide sound educational direction to the school's continued development. However, the aims and mission of the school do not state what a good nursery school should be, or reflect the particular and unique needs of the community it serves.

33. The school is well managed and runs smoothly from day to day. The complementary skills of the headteacher and deputy head contribute to its effective management. The responsibilities of the deputy headteacher have been developed substantially and she is now fulfilling a wide-ranging role that is contributing to school improvement. The school's work is clearly defined through a large number of policies and a well-constructed development plan that concentrates on raising standards. The deputy headteacher and co-ordinators of the different areas of learning fulfil their responsibilities well and feel empowered to be effective. The roles of co-ordinators are clearly defined and they have contributed significantly also to school improvement. There are regular management meetings and communication between staff is strong, so that all are aware of what is happening and feel involved.
34. Special educational needs is co-ordinated effectively by the headteacher. The school has not yet begun to implement the revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs, as it is following the instructions of the local education authority in the timing of necessary changes. There is already close liaison with parents of children with special educational needs, but the school will need to ensure other aspects of the revised Code are implemented, as required, by September 2002.
35. There are coherent systems for monitoring the school's work and this has led to a much-improved quality of teaching. Whereas almost a quarter of teaching was found to be unsatisfactory in 2000, all teaching was at least satisfactory in this inspection and most teaching was good. Lesson observations are conducted regularly by the headteacher, using specific criteria for judging the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Records show that this monitoring is of good quality and teachers receive valuable feedback. Planning in all areas of learning, together with records of children's attainment, are also monitored by senior managers. The headteacher would gain further valuable information if she undertook some 'timetabled' teaching; at present, she does not do any. Co-ordinators of the various areas of learning fulfil their roles well. They regularly monitor teachers' planning, assessment records and the progress that children are making, ensuring good practice in most areas of learning. The substantial amount of monitoring undertaken means that senior managers have ample information from which to evaluate the school's effectiveness and identify new developments.
36. The school is very well staffed and the match of staff expertise to curriculum needs is generally good, with the exception of intensive support to children at early stages in learning English where greater expertise is needed. Teachers have received training in working with bilingual children and all staff have gained in their understanding by working alongside the inclusion worker. Otherwise, opportunities for staff development are very good. A number of members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, are undertaking training and the school encourages its staff to fulfil their potential as far as possible. There are very good arrangements for performance management and the school is adopting good practice in extending its systems of performance review to include nursery nurses. Some good decisions have been made about staffing, for example, employing someone to support the introduction of information and communication technology has made a major impact on developments.
37. Although parts of the school need some refurbishment, the accommodation is light and spacious and staff work hard to create an attractive and stimulating environment. Children's work is carefully mounted and displayed. Classrooms are large, well laid out and support the provision of a wide range of learning activities. Moreover, the outdoor area is a highly valuable resource that contributes significantly to children's personal development and to their progress in a number of areas of learning. It includes covered areas for imaginative play, hard areas for riding tricycles and other wheeled toys, a sandpit, a large paddling pool that can be filled with water in the summer and used as an arena at other times and a wildlife area. It is particularly valuable for children who live in flats or in overcrowded accommodation to have access to such a spacious garden that provides them with freedom and so many opportunities for learning. The school has a rolling



programme for carrying out necessary repairs but has had to spend a significant amount of money on increasing its security following a series of break-ins and vandalism.

38. The school is well resourced with equipment and learning materials to support all areas of learning. It has particularly good resources to support the development of information and communication technology skills: there are two computers in each classroom, with a variety of software to support children's development and the school has an interactive whiteboard. Every child is encouraged to borrow a library book and the school has books in some community languages. Story sacks, which contain books, bilingual tapes and story props, can be borrowed from the school. Resources are chosen to reflect the diverse range of cultures from which children come.
39. Financial planning is linked well to developments that have been identified as a priority. The limited amount of money provided for the funding of special educational needs is used efficiently and the school is careful to use this for children with the highest level of need. Funding for children at the early stages of learning English could be used more effectively: current provision does not make best use of the school's human resources to ensure effective intensive support for these children. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used well to support children's progress. Nursery nurses and other staff make a major contribution to the school's effectiveness and all staff make very good use of the school's outside area. The school makes good use of new technology to support children's learning and in its administrative systems.

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

- i. To improve standards and the quality of education further the headteacher and staff, in consultation with the advisory body, should:
  - (1) improve the quality of support for children with English as an additional language, especially for those in the early stages of learning; (paragraphs 2,17, 21, 47, 54)
  - (2) explore different ways of organising afternoon sessions so as to maintain the interest and concentration of children. This may include for instance using the specialist skills of teachers more fully in whole class activities such as dance, or in group activities using information technology; (paragraph 18)
  - (3) use focused activities in teaching more fully; (paragraph 13)
  - (4) review the aims and mission statement and rewrite them to record what the school sees as most important in nursery education, and reflecting the unique needs of the local community. This to help provide a vision for the school's further development; (paragraph 32)
  - (5) improve the partnership with parents by:
    - extending the availability and use of the toy and book libraries; and
    - arranging more courses and meetings in the family room, especially in family language skills. (paragraphs 29, 30)

In addition to these key issues the following minor issues should be considered in the school's action plan:

- the school should extend the use of silence and reflection, and use these as a normal part of the day's activities. Teachers should build more opportunities for spiritual development into their planning; (paragraphs 24, 62, 69)
- provide more opportunities for children to talk about and record their mathematical experiences; (paragraph 56)

- use 'big books' more fully in reading and story sessions; (paragraph 51)
- give more emphasis to developing writing skills for higher attaining children. (paragraph 50)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	16	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	22	60	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of sessions observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each session represents more than three percentage points.

### 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)	104
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	57

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	28

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	63

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8

Total number of education support staff	7.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	228

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

## Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	482770
Total expenditure	463564
Expenditure per pupil	4501
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1510
Balance carried forward to next year	17686

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	104
Number of questionnaires returned	56

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	14	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	25	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	34	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	39	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	73	20	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	30	5	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	13	5	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	32	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	68	27	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	71	23	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	23	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	27	5	2	14

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

Parents are very supportive of the school and are very satisfied with what it provides for their children.

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents recognised the considerable improvements made in the last two years but think that the building is in a shabby condition and would press for redecoration.

## **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**

40. Children are making very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are likely to achieve well beyond the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year. They are happy and secure and staff work most effectively together to ensure consistent practice and high expectations at all times. Parents are pleased with the attitudes the school teaches their children and find that the school has a very positive impact on their behaviour.
41. Children are keen to learn and show interest in the wide range of activities provided. They show an unusual level of confidence for children of their age in the way they respond to the nursery routines, how they relate to one another and to adults and in their response to new experiences. They are making good progress in learning to care for their personal hygiene and becoming independent in putting on their coats and doing them up. They are making very good progress in developing independence as learners and almost all children are confident to make choices from the activities on offer indoors and in the garden. Children concentrate at least well, and often very well for extended periods of time. During focused activities, where they work in a group with an adult, they sustain their interest and attention very well. Most also focus well during whole class activities and need only a slight reminder if their attention wanders. Higher attaining children persevere for long periods, for example working on their own at the computer or engaging in creative activities. When playing inside or out, they sustain their role-play, for considerable periods of time, sometimes alone but often in groups, becoming really absorbed in imaginative play.
42. The nursery enables children to develop self-confidence and provides an environment in which all children are made to feel valued and of worth. Staff are careful to celebrate a range of cultures and to ensure that children value one another's experiences and cultural heritage. Whilst expectations for children's behaviour and attitudes are always appropriately high, adults speak to children respectfully and are very caring towards them. They model sensitive and thoughtful behaviour very well, so that children learn how to treat others. Consequently, children are confident to show their feelings and those who know sufficient English readily express their ideas.
43. Children make very good progress in learning to relate with others: boys and girls get on well together and children from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds interact harmoniously. There is a significant amount of collaborative play and children relate well when working in large or smaller groups. They often organise themselves in playing together, for example, three children lined up facing the wall with balls and took it in turn to try to throw the balls through the basketball net. Adults encourage this by saying to children, 'Sort out who's going first'. They are gaining considerably in their understanding of what makes for harmony, for example, taking turns and showing an emerging concern for others. At times, there are spontaneous instances of love and kindness. For instance, when two children sat next to each other at the computer, one put his arm round the other and then gently stroked her back. Most seek out others to share their experiences. A small minority occasionally displays minor aggression towards other children but, whenever this occurs, it is handled very effectively by staff and good relationships are quickly re-established. Children are developing a sense of community; this is most evident when they eat lunch together and on those occasions when they come together for some activity that crosses beyond their usual class groups. When a teacher played the accordion to accompany a captivating story in the garden, children from a number of different classes spontaneously sat around him, listening and watching intently. One afternoon a week, all the children come together for singing and musical activities, although it was not possible to observe this because it did not occur within the days of the inspection.
44. Children behave very well and at times extraordinarily well when their age is taken into account.

They display a high level of self-control for three year olds and are making very good progress in learning about the conventions of a classroom. Some are already familiar with putting up their hands to answer a question and many children in one class took the initiative by crossing their legs and folding their arms when they were asked to sit round the edge of the carpet to listen to a story. They have a very good understanding of right from wrong and almost without exception follow the rules and expectations of the nursery. They know the routines and their co-operation enables each class to function in an orderly and purposeful manner without detracting from children's freedom of expression. Children's behaviour at lunchtime, when they sit in class groups around tables and eat with knives and forks, is exemplary. They are learning always to say 'please' and 'thank you' and to follow appropriate rules that make this a very positive occasion. Staff are very careful to make children aware of the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. For instance, a child who had upset another was asked to think about what he had done that could have made the other child feel anger towards him. Two boys who had been behaving too boisterously in the garden and upset another child were talked to very directly by the teacher, so that their behaviour was challenged and they were effectively 'stopped in their tracks'. The teacher put them into a position of having to think about how the other child had been made to feel and ensured they all shook hands finally to show that being friends was much better than being unkind or thoughtless to others.

45. Teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good. The nursery emphasises this area and plans the curriculum very carefully when children enter the nursery, so that one experience builds sequentially upon another. In the first half-term, the emphasis is on establishing routines, communicating expectations and teaching children to relate positively with one another. There is thorough liaison with children's parents or carers, so that information about prior attainment is taken into account. The curriculum is carefully planned based on the specific needs of the children. Their confidence is gradually built up by taking them out into the immediate environment and only later in the year extending their horizons through trips further afield. Teachers ask challenging questions that promote independent learning, for example, the teacher prompted a child to think about whether a 'letter' he had 'written' would fit into the envelope, but allowed him the time and space to discover for himself that it would need to be folded. All staff have high expectations and a shared understanding of what makes for effective personal, social and emotional development. Their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum in this area of learning is very good and they use most appropriate methods to promote children's development. Staff talk about how things have gone when they evaluate their practice in class at the end of each day and this provides an opportunity for any difficulties in a child's motivation or involvement to be picked up quickly. The success of this aspect of provision forms a very good basis for achievement in other areas of learning.

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

46. Children are making satisfactory progress overall in communication and language: those whose English is reasonably competent make good progress during focused activities with adults and in whole class sessions. They express their ideas using a relatively wide range of vocabulary when answering questions or describing their experiences. For example, a child talked about how, 'Mummy made pancakes and they were delicious', another described the hatching of a chick by saying, 'He comes out with his beak, he peck, peck, pecks', and another said, 'Sometimes, when I go to my grandad's, I have tangerines and they taste really juicy'. Children talk readily in whole class situations and relish any opportunity to communicate and be involved. However, a significant minority of children have speech difficulties and around a third are at the early stage of learning English. It is difficult to make sense of what some children say and some beginners at English speak very little. Whilst higher attaining children who are native English speakers are likely to reach the early learning goals in communication and language by the age of five, the attainment of many children is likely to be below or well below expectations.
47. Children make good progress in listening, showing interest and curiosity, and all staff pay very good attention to promoting good listening skills. Children listen well individually and in groups and are likely to meet the early learning goal in this aspect of communication by the time they leave the Reception class. They follow instructions and, even when their speaking skills are limited,



many understood a good deal of what is said to them when adults use props and other methods to communicate clearly. Only a small minority show limited understanding, but they try hard to understand.

48. Children are making good progress in learning about the purposes of writing and teaching is good in this area. Children 'make books' about things they have done, for instance, groups of children made books about the seeds they had planted. With the teacher, they thought about what they had done and drew pictures; some higher attainers wrote their names on the front and made a clear link between what they were drawing and a particular meaning, telling the teacher what they wanted to write. The office role play areas indoors and out – which include a keyboard, telephone, calculators, writing pads and pens - provides very good opportunities for children to write within an imaginative context. They respond very well to this, making a shopping list and pretending to take restaurant orders over the telephone as well as exploring the equipment. Frequently, a group of children play together in 'the office', each fulfilling a different role.
49. Their progress in handwriting is satisfactory. Higher attaining children form some letters correctly, most often letters in their names. They try to write underneath their drawings, often scribbling but producing occasional letters of the alphabet. They are making good progress, through regular opportunities, in holding and using a pencil or pen. All children are gaining in control when drawing lines and circles, which are the prerequisites for learning to write. Higher attaining children would benefit from having more opportunities to develop their early writing skills as well as a greater emphasis on the shape and form of letters.
50. Children are making good progress in learning about books. They know that print carries meaning, most handle books carefully, turn the pages and enjoy looking at the pictures. Higher attainers are beginning to 'read' the pictures and seek out books for information. Some were observed talking to one another about the pictures in a book on transport, then reproducing the sounds that certain forms of transport make. Some understand the concept of a word and can recognise the name cards of others in the class. Some children predict developments in a story and recall familiar stories, such 'As Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. A display outside one class included stories children had dictated for an adult to write down; these showed that they were able to make up a simple piece of narrative with some events and actions and reflected a growing awareness of how stories fit together. When adults bring books to life, children show considerable fascination and enjoyment. A member of the advisory body visited the school during the inspection and read two books to a group of children, as well as playing his clarinet for them. He gleaned the utmost from the books by getting children to count, asking them about colours on their clothes, linking objects with words and generally making sure all understood the vocabulary in the stories. In response, most children were very enthusiastic and eager to take part. There was some other good practice, but the way that books are read to children, including the 'big books' that are used in schools to support the teaching of reading, could be improved significantly. Staff are not focusing sufficiently on asking children questions about the pictures, emphasising the sounds of words, linking things in the story with children's own experience, or asking them to recall what has happened. As a result, children are not getting as much pleasure or learning as they could from being read to. There was some evidence during the inspection of higher attaining children knowing a number of letters and some linking of sounds to letters, most recognising the initial letter sound of their names, but this area of literacy development could receive greater attention, as could the use of rhymes and songs.
51. Communication, language and literacy are co-ordinated well and this ensures there is an effective overview of all aspects of provision. The co-ordinator liaises with the speech and language therapists and has a good understanding of children's special educational needs. She regularly monitors planning and samples assessment records to track children's progress; formal feedback is provided to other members of staff. Assessment records are thorough and manageable and so provide useful information for future planning. There has been some very good recent collaboration between the co-ordinator and the inclusion worker as part of the school's attempt to improve the teaching of communication. Very good input by the inclusion work has led to some clear improvements in the way activities are organised and it has raised staff awareness about strengths and areas for development in their individual practice.

52. Most notably, the introduction of more focused activities with adults has provided greater potential opportunity for staff to develop children's spoken language and communication. Almost without exception, staff engage in meaningful and supportive interaction with children, so that their language development is encouraged. Interactions with children are at their best when adults ask open-ended questions and create situations where children want to talk about something that is directly meaningful to them. In one of the best lessons observed, the teacher made very good use of a puppet to stimulate children's speaking and modelled language very well. In response, children spoke for longer periods of time than was generally observed during the inspection. They were excited and keen to communicate what 'Pam Pam' the puppet had done when he 'visited' their homes. The inclusion worker used very effective methods to develop children's speaking and to extend their vocabulary during a walk to the shop and when engaging them in imaginative play in the outdoor sandpit. Some good practice was also evident on a number of occasions when a nursery nurse worked with a whole class and with small groups of children. Generally, there is more that staff could do to develop children's language and to extend their vocabulary and this is especially necessary for those who are beginners at English.
53. There is scope for more focused activities and for a much greater emphasis on whole class sessions aimed at developing speaking and communicating. The timetabled sessions for children who are beginners in English are not developing their language skills effectively: senior managers need to ensure these sessions are led by a member of staff who models clear English and maximises opportunities for developing children's speaking. The inclusion worker has produced detailed records of children's attainment in speaking and communicating; these now need to be built on by developing language across the curriculum. When a small group of children was taken to one side during story time for support, the teaching was good but children would benefit from experiencing the story and the support sessions. The planning sheets, that identify key vocabulary and appropriate types of question to ask all children during focused activities, represent very good practice, support language development and are informing staff well. Lesson plans do not at present show how activities will contribute to the acquisition of language specifically for children at an early stage in learning the language.

### **Mathematical development**

54. Children are on course to reach the expected levels at the end of the Reception year. Several higher attaining children are nearly at this level now in their ability to count, but not in some other mathematical skills. Adults use stories well to re-inforce ideas about numbers and in one of these almost all the children could count the tangerines that were provided accurately to ten and some correctly to 21.
55. All teachers include daily experiences to help children's mathematical development, notably in the use of number games and rhymes and in the use of role play including shops, an office, and a Chinese restaurant. Teaching is satisfactory, but teachers do not build in enough opportunities for encouraging children to tell of or record their experiences either in speaking, drawing or mark making. This means that although children make satisfactory progress, it could be better. There are some good examples of where this was done as when natural objects had to be put in variously sized boxes, counted and either drawn on the lid or written as a number. However, although there were many examples of the good use of measure in water and sand play, children were not encouraged to tell what they had done, or to choose a way of recording this.
56. There are good examples of teachers using situations well, as when children were buns in the baker's shop. In this activity the adult asked children to say what the pattern of children was. Several were able to detect that it was alternate boys and girls and at least one was able to predict that if there was another one added it should be a boy. The adult was careful to ensure that the children could understand 'counting back' and also that they had the idea of 'none'. She then reinforced their learning by asking, "If I kept all the pennies I had from selling these buns in my hand, how much would I have?"
57. Teachers use information technology to very good effect in their teaching. There is a good

selection of well chosen number programs for use on the computer. These are used well. Children had also drawn down Chinese numbers from the Internet as part of their celebration of the Chinese New Year. In the best sessions, teachers had arranged for simple board games to be played with groups with very different mathematical capabilities. When the teacher was playing with the higher attaining children she required them to count on and back, to predict who would win and to recognise numbers. Immediately following this she played with another group at a much lower level of understanding where, as well as learning to take turns and to match objects, the intent was to teach and name colours.

58. Children enjoy their mathematical activities and are eager to learn. They concentrate on the tasks they are given and delight in winning the games or in beating the computer. The subject is well managed and there are sufficient resources for learning.

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

59. Children have a satisfactory knowledge of the world around them and are likely to reach the expected levels at the end of the Reception year. Their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) will be well above those expected. The quality of teaching is good and in elements of ICT, very good.
60. Teachers provide a good range of practical activities, which require children to use all their senses to explore their world. They are encouraged to use tools to make things and magnifying glasses and cameras to see what is around them more clearly and this helps their learning. A very good series of visits to the local shops and market, the church and temple help them to learn about where they live. Some very interesting work on buildings just outside the school had been very successful in getting children to look more closely at what is around them. The school also invites visitors to come into school and show and tell children of their own customs and beliefs. The school is careful not to confuse children and centres on three or four festivals to explore. Recently children have visited the church at Christmas, have celebrated the Chinese New Year, and are looking forward to an Irish week. Musicians and actors come into the school and work directly with children and this makes learning exciting.
61. In activities set up to encourage scientific thinking, adults are very careful to make sure that children learn for themselves. A good example of this was in a water play activity where a water pump was provided. Children were encouraged to experiment, try different ways of setting it up, and to watch others. The real joy of a boy in discovering he could make it work produced a grin almost as wide as his face and led him to continue his experimenting for a further intense ten minutes. Good use of cards, suggesting language and activities for adults to develop understanding, help adults to extend children's learning. These were particularly well used in an activity where children were examining, planting and watching seeds grow. In many activities there are moments of wonder, but there are not enough opportunities for silence and reflection.
62. Children have good opportunities for making things and are taught the correct way of using tools. Because of this children were able to bang in nails and cut materials without damage to themselves. A remarkable vehicle was made during one session, which involved a child cutting out the holes for an axle. He would not accept that the wheels could just be stuck on.
63. Adults use their own experience well to interest children in the wider world. In a story about an African child the adult (herself from Africa) showed exactly how she rolled her scarf to make the basket sit on her head. She told them about the differences in her African garden and theirs. An African child was able to tell with pride that she came from Uganda.
64. Standards in understanding and using ICT are well above what is nationally expected. The very knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator encourages adults to use ICT throughout the curriculum and to see computers as only one part of this. There is notably good use of digital and other cameras. Books are made from pictures taken in the school and in children's own homes, and these are used as reading materials to good effect. All teachers have been recently trained to use computers and other technology in their teaching and this has had a very positive effect. The

school is very well resourced. Each classroom has two computers and printers, cassette recorders, CD players and cameras. Additionally the school has an interactive whiteboard, which allows direct teaching of skills to be given to larger groups. Floor robots and remote controlled vehicles help children to control and program for themselves. The school also encourages parents to use the computer in the family room and runs a computer clinic each Friday after school. The teaching of ICT is a strength of the school.

### **Physical development**

65. Children are on course to reach the expected levels by the time they complete the Reception year. Their skills in dance are very well developed and already at the levels of children at least a year older than they are. The quality of teaching is good, with very good teaching in dance.
66. Children use pencils, crayons, scissors and other small tools effectively for their age. They are taught the correct way of holding and using tools and are encouraged to look after them. Children show well-developed skills in using cassette recorders and computer keyboards.
67. The school uses its large and very well arranged nursery garden to very good effect to provide challenging physical activities for the children. In using these, children demonstrate that they can use space well, move in varied ways and climb and balance appropriate to their age. Children have good ball control skills for their age and can use bats with some success. They use wheeled toys with skill, avoiding others and co-operate in driving the 'police car' and 'bus'. There is photographic evidence to show very full use of the garden throughout the year. The grassed areas encourage running and rolling and the large concrete pool, complete with fountain, is popular for summer paddling. The garden is particularly valuable as it gives opportunities for children to enjoy space, which their own housing does not allow.
68. Children respond well to the physical activities, which are encouraged, especially to the whole class dance sessions. Two teachers were observed teaching their own classes for dance. The rooms were cleared, providing a very good space to work in. Children and adults worked in bare feet, which improved the quality of movement. Music was very well chosen, challenging targets were set for children and these were achieved. Children moved with good rhythm and responded well to the music. They co-operated with each other well and were able to reflect different moods. They expressed seeds growing and rain falling. They extended themselves physically and were rightly exhausted at the end. Teachers were able to use this time for calming them down, but did not encourage stillness and silence sufficiently. A visitor to the school played his bass clarinet, which led to amazing spontaneous ballroom dancing by the children and huge enjoyment.

### **Creative development**

69. Children make good progress in creative development and should exceed the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of the Reception year.
70. In art, teaching is very good and a range of attractive materials is provided for children to create their own works using paint, fabrics, ribbons and other materials. They produce sensitive and creative work in a range of media and are making very good progress, especially when working in two dimensions. They usually work independently and become absorbed, but have also worked together to produce some exciting pieces of work that show their ability to sustain concentration for significant periods of time. They choose media and combine paint, fabric and other materials very imaginatively to achieve some highly effective pieces of work for children of their age. Their drawings show an emerging link with 'reality', and are lively and expressive. When they work in three dimensions, using junk materials, their models are often representative of an identified object. For example, a child stuck two cardboard tubes to a transparent envelope to represent a pair of binoculars and then painted the construction. When working with play dough, they are learning to form and control the medium and use a range of appropriate tools. Children have used computer graphics programs to paint pictures and some children are learning to recognise colours.

71. In their imaginative development, children are making very good progress as a result of the many opportunities adults provide and the way they become involved in role play alongside the children. There are many activities from which to choose, with props that foster imaginative role play. A child took photographs during one session and another came over wearing a hat and carrying a pad and pen, saying he was a postman. Their play, alone and in groups, reveals much imagination and the artwork they produce, particularly in mixed media, shows that they are able to use materials exceptionally well to explore ideas and feelings. Children who are at early stages in learning English are not able to express their ideas easily but they, too, take part in imaginative play.
72. Children are making good progress in music. They are beginning to understand how sounds can be changed and they showed excitement and fascination during the inspection when they listened to the variety of sounds that can be made with a clarinet and an accordion. The main music session of the week did not take place during the inspection, so there was limited evidence of children playing simple instruments. The school is well resourced for music, however, and all classes have instruments that are accessible to children. Some children know the words of a number of familiar songs; some can follow the actions to accompany songs. When they are given the opportunity, many children move rhythmically to music and in a dance session they were able to combine a sequence of movements to represent the growth of a plant. In this and another dance lesson, children became totally absorbed in the music and responded to different styles of music well for children of their age. They would benefit from more opportunities to move to music and these sessions could very well be offered during the afternoons when the pace for more focused learning tends to slacken as children become more tired.
73. The subject is co-ordinated effectively and teaching is consistently at least good.
74. Assessment is thorough and the opportunities provided ensure that children of all capabilities build well on their prior attainment. Classrooms provide a creative and stimulating environment in which to learn and there are some good examples of collections of objects, such as shells, which promote children's visual awareness. There are half-termly concerts with professional musicians and the school has been host to a theatre company.