

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**STAGHILLS NURSERY SCHOOL**

**ROSSENDALE**

**LEA area: LANCASHIRE**

**Unique reference number: 119100**

**Acting Headteacher: Mrs G. M. Martin**

**Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett  
1569**

**Dates of inspection: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November – Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2000**

**Inspection number: 224486**

**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:	Top Barn Lane Newchurch Rossendale Lancashire
Postcode:	BB4 7UE
Telephone number:	01706 213303
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Appropriate authority:	Lancashire
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G. Pearson
Date of previous inspection:	19.5.1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
<b>MICHAEL HEWLETT</b>	<b>Registered inspector</b>	<b>Communication, Language and Literacy</b>	<b>How high are standards?</b>  <b>How well are pupils taught?</b>  <b>How well is the school led and managed?</b>  <b>What should the school do to improve further?</b>
		<b>Mathematical development</b>	
		<b>Knowledge and Understanding of the World</b>	
		<b>English as an additional language</b>	
<b>JANE HUGHES</b>	<b>Lay inspector</b>		<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</b>  <b>How well does the school care for its pupils?</b>  <b>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</b>
<b>JUNE HUNTER</b>	<b>Team inspector</b>	<b>Physical development</b>	<b>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</b>
		<b>Creative development</b>	
		<b>Personal, Social and Emotional development</b>	
		<b>Special educational needs</b>	
		<b>Equal opportunities</b>	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Staghills Nursery is a large nursery school situated in the Newchurch area of Rossendale. There are 130 children on roll of whom 77 are girls and 53 are boys. The school is situated in the middle of a council estate and children travel from a wide area to come to the school. All the children attend part time. They are taught by three teachers, including the headteacher, who work full time and one teacher who works part time. Three full time and two part time nursery nurses work with the teachers. In addition, one full time and one part time nursery nurse are deployed to work with children who have special educational needs. Twelve children have been identified as having special educational needs (9%). This is the same figure as when the school was last inspected. A small percentage of children (2%) do not have English as their first language. Children's attainment on entry to school varies considerably but is average overall. More children are arriving in school with some delay in their speech and in their personal, social and emotional development than previously.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has retired and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. She is currently acting headteacher.

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

Staghills Nursery is an effective nursery school. The good standards found during the last inspection have been maintained. Children make good progress during their time in school, particularly in their listening skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. They enjoy coming, work hard and their behaviour is excellent. The quality of the teaching is good overall because staff know the children so well, have good relationships and set work for them at just the right level of difficulty. There is good leadership from the acting headteacher and staff who work as an effective team.

#### **3. What the school does well**

- Teaching is good
- Promotes excellent relationships
- Children have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is excellent
- Leadership and management by the headteacher are good
- Maintains excellent links with parents who make a considerable contribution to children's learning

#### **4. What could be improved**

- Planning and provision for physical development outdoors
  - Fencing in some parts of the school grounds
- Checking how effective spending has been

*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 1997. Since then it has made good progress in many areas. Standards have been maintained in all the curriculum areas and the quality of the teaching is still a strength. Systems for evaluating the work of the school are better now that the acting headteacher monitors the teaching and children's learning. Planning of lessons is better, the activities set for the children are more purposeful and they understand more of what is expected of them. Higher attaining



children are given work which is more suited to their individual needs and, because of this, they are making faster progress. The school is well placed to continue the good progress it has made so far.

## **STANDARDS**

By the time children leave nursery the majority are making good progress towards achieving the early learning goals which they are expected to reach at the end of the foundation stage. The exceptions are in children's listening skills and in their personal, social and emotional development where standards are higher. Children's skills in physical development are in line with what is expected but they have too few opportunities to practise these skills. Children who have special educational needs make good progress when their achievements are compared to what they managed previously. The small number who are learning English as an additional language make similarly good progress.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to their learning and enjoy school. They are very enthusiastic and listen very carefully to instructions
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children's behaviour is excellent. They are trustworthy and work well without direct adult intervention. Adults have consistently high expectations of children.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent. Children show real concern for each other. They are confident and work well together and with adults. Children show increasing initiative in their activities throughout the school.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. It is well promoted and children are very punctual.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
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.*

Three quarters of the teaching is good, one in ten lessons is very good and the rest is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of the teaching is consistently good across most areas of the curriculum and between the two classes. Staff set high standards for the children and make sure that lessons are well organised by making good use of the resources available. They know the children's individual needs well and set the tasks at just the right level of difficulty, making sure that higher attainers are not given work which is too easy. They plan most of their work thoroughly but planning for physical development outside does not contain the same level of detail as the rest. Lessons outside do not occur frequently enough to allow children to practise skills they have learned. Inside, the lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities so that children stay actively involved.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy is successful. This is because staff have adapted the national strategies to meet the needs of nursery age children. A good example of this was seen when staff used number patterns linked to their Autumn topic to practise mental arithmetic and number recognition.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range of interesting activities indoors which meets the needs of all the children. However, opportunities for physical activities outdoors are limited. Planning and provision for this area is not given a high enough priority.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision. Children's individual learning needs are carefully assessed and planned for. Effective support and good teaching enable the children to achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The children make good progress and they are encouraged and supported by all the staff. The school makes sure that children experience the full curriculum range.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for all aspects of children's personal development. Early experiences in the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are sensitively encouraged through well planned activities and careful explanation.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good pastoral care of the children in most areas. Staff are very consistent in their management of behaviour and work very effectively to enhance children's personal development. However, fencing at the top of the steps in the outside area needs to be extended to ensure children's safety.

### 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 very effective. The acting headteacher and staff have created a very positive ethos and they work well as a team. The acting headteacher leads by example and has set a clear direction for the school. Monitoring of teaching and children's learning has improved and is now good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a very positive influence on the school. It fulfils all its statutory responsibilities, supports the headteacher and individual members visit regularly.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems are in place, which collect detailed information about the progress of individual children. The school has started to use this information to check on the progress made by each year group.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources. The school does not have a delegated budget but seeks out value for money when making spending decisions. No arrangements are yet in place to check how successful spending has been and what impact it has had on children's learning.

Staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the children. Accommodation is good, both indoors and out. Resources for learning are good in most areas but only adequate for physical development outdoors.

### **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 and they behave very well.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and organises valuable meetings to share information.</li> <li>• Self confidence and independence are encouraged.</li> <li>• Children make good progress, especially those who have special educational needs.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable and friendly. Most parents would feel confident about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small proportion would welcome more information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings confirm parents' very positive views about the school. Children enjoy coming and, once there, they are well taught. The school keeps parents well informed through regular feedback, written reports and parents' meetings. It is most successful in this area. It has established an excellent partnership with them. They are overwhelmingly positive in their views on almost all aspects of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children arrive in school with levels of attainment which are average but more children have speech problems and delays in their personal, social and emotional development than when the school was last inspected. By the time they leave nursery they are likely to reach average standards in most areas of the curriculum. The exceptions are in their listening skills and in their personal, social and emotional development where standards are likely to be higher. Children are enthusiastic and hard working. They learn well during their time in nursery and make good progress. The standards found during the last inspection have been maintained.
2. Improvements have come about because teachers' planning is more detailed and higher attainers are set work which is better matched to their particular needs, More emphasis is placed on checking how successful the teaching has been and then making changes where necessary.
3. In personal, social and emotional development children make good progress and are on line to exceed the national standards expected when they leave the nursery. Children are confident and are eager to try new things. They are friendly and speak spontaneously to both adults and children. All children behave extremely well, and work and play happily with others. They co-operate with all adults and children, treating each other with consideration and kindness. They know how to take their turn and share resources with others. Children are confident, handle equipment and materials with care and make choices about what they will do. They have positive attitudes to their learning and work with a sense of purpose.
4. Great emphasis is placed on improving children's communication, language and literacy skills. Children are attentive and respond positively when asked to do something as, for example, when they describe what they have been doing at home during the "shared news" time. At group time, they listen patiently for long periods to the contributions made by their friends and take their turn to speak. Their ability to listen and concentrate for such extended periods is exceptional for children of this age. Most are able to retell a story using some of the words they have heard. Adults working with them keep the discussions purposeful and ask questions, which gives each group member the chance to express themselves. Children enjoy reading books and treat them properly, turning the pages carefully and making sure they are returned to the library area when they have finished with them. Most hold their pencil properly and some are making good attempts at writing their own names. Staff place a high emphasis on teaching these basic skills. Higher attaining children can identify some of the letters in words they find around the nursery. They know many of the sounds that these letters make.
5. Numeracy skills are developing well with some of the children able to count to ten and a few counting much higher than this. A feature of their work is the way in which they can apply their knowledge in practical situations. An example of this was seen in the way one group of children were able to solve simple addition and subtraction calculations as they tried to work out how many leaves of different sizes they had collected. Some have a good understanding of mathematical language and are happy to talk about position, shape, size and quantity.
6. Children progress well in getting to know about the world around them. Through investigations and exploration, they develop a good understanding of some scientific principles such as magnetism. They talk confidently about features of their local community and many are able to describe some of the landmarks they pass on their way to school. They can recognise some elements of time passing such as the ages of their brothers and sisters. They use tools safely and know how to design and construct

models. Children are confident when using computers. Many know how to use the programmes independently, changing shapes and sizes using the mouse to control the screen. They show good awareness of different cultures and beliefs as well as their own.

7. Standards in physical development are similar to those found during the school's last inspection. Children are in line to meet the expected national standard but they have too few opportunities to practise their skills outdoors. Their control of small equipment such as pencils, crayons, and felt pens is generally good when drawing and attempting to write their name. All can use paintbrushes and paint rollers to paint pictures. Hammers and other tools are used with care and control. Children show appropriate co-ordination and a sound awareness of space and others as they move their bodies to music. Outdoors, some children show skill as they ride tricycles and other wheeled vehicles across the play area.

8. Standards in creative development are similar to those found during the school's last inspection. Children are in line to meet the expected national standard by the time they leave the nursery. They explore and make good use of their imagination by using a variety of materials such as dough, paint, glue and collage. They listen and respond to music through songs, dance and the use of percussion instruments. All enter into role play with enthusiasm, shopping in the supermarket or dressing up to go to a wedding in the home corner.

9. Children with special educational needs learn at a good pace when compared to their previous attainment. Some of them have complex needs and they receive very good support from the staff who work with them. They are given a wide range of interesting and challenging tasks which meet their individual needs and requirements

10. Children learning English as an additional language are making progress at a similar rate. Staff make good provision for them by ensuring they are able to take part in the full curriculum range and that every chance is taken to practise their language skills.

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

11. Children show very good attitudes to their learning. They really like coming to school and are eager to join in an activity as soon as they arrive at the start of the session. They are very well mannered and treat their peers and teachers with respect. Children are enthusiastic participants in the wide range of activities organised by staff; they equally enjoy listening to a taped story through headphones as they do baking currant buns to take home. They carry out instructions carefully and with pride.

12. Standards of behaviour are excellent in all areas of the school. Children go about their daily activities in a very sensible and conscientious manner. They demonstrate a very clear understanding of the simple school rules and respond immediately to any requests from staff. They know to hang up aprons and to tidy away resources at the right time. There have been no exclusions from the school.

13. Children's personal development is very good. They enjoy taking responsibility and carry out duties carefully and without fuss. The daily helpers are proud to carry back their messages about the elements for the weatherboard and many children are confident to stand at the front of their group and talk in front of others. Birthday celebrations provide extended opportunities for children to speak to their peers and to share sweets and good wishes. Children show great maturity when working with their peers who have special educational or physical needs. They are very familiar with the problems these children face daily and they try their best to help. For example, when giving out milk at snacktime, the helper automatically selected a different straw for one child that was easier to use. She made sure the carton was secure in the child's grip before moving on to the next person. Such

instances of thoughtfulness are evident among most of the children. Children with special needs respond very well to the opportunities they are offered for increasing independence. One child dropped a book on the floor instead of replacing it on the bookshelf. With encouragement from an adult, he picked up the book and replaced it in the bookcase. He then saw that it was upside down and back to front, so with some care he took the book out and put it back in correctly.

14. Relationships throughout the nursery are excellent. Staff and children develop very warm relationships and it is obvious that the staff take a genuine interest in the lives and opinions of the children. They often talk to them about their families and are always quick to pursue a comment made by a child. This helps to create a greater feeling of family within the nursery. Children relate extremely well to each other. They co-operate during activities and share resources well. This ensures the nursery runs as a kind and pleasant community in which personal and social development is highly valued.

15. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. Most children are brought to school on time by their parents and there is a prompt start to the day.

16. Standards seen are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

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

17. Overall, the teaching in the school is of good quality with three quarters of the lessons seen judged to be good. One in ten lessons was very good and none was unsatisfactory. The strengths identified during the last inspection have been maintained and built on. Staff have responded very well to the minor weaknesses pointed out then. Tasks set for the children are well organised and most of the planning is more detailed. The learning outcomes for lessons are more clearly stated and children know what they are expected to achieve. Children of all attainment levels are well catered for and this has improved from last time when some higher attainers were given work which was too easy for them. They are set work which is interesting but also demanding. They learn faster because of this.

18. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and they are successful in introducing some elements of the national strategies in language and literacy to nursery age children. For example, during most lessons staff encourage children to practise their mental arithmetic skills by applying what they know in practical situations. They can work out how many of their friends are absent from the group and change the number of drinks they need to collect for that session.

19. Most activities are well organised and the teaching caters for children of all levels of prior attainment. As a result children learn faster and sessions move at a brisk pace. An example of this was seen during a mathematical activity when children were asked to sort different fruits into sets and then count them. Some found the task very challenging at first and the teacher's attention focussed on these, offering advice and suggestions but making sure that each child was able to make a contribution. She then turned her attention to the higher attainers, asking them questions which made them think hard as they counted objects up to ten and beyond their good teaching such as this that each group member had acquired new knowledge and could explain how their work could be improved. Teachers demand high standards in what they expect children to achieve and the children respond accordingly by moving sensibly between activities, tidying up when asked to and completing tasks before moving on.

20. Good quality teaching is 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 standards, although it is still satisfactory. Planning and teaching for the outside area is not as successful because it is not given as high a priority as other aspects of the curriculum. On the occasions when it is used, adults spend a lot of their time supervising the children rather than teaching them. As a result, children get fewer chances to practise and improve their skills in physical development and this slows their progress.

21. Adults manage the children well. They insist on high standards of behaviour and children are very clear about these expectations as they are constantly reinforced throughout the school day. Some of the children who have special educational needs demonstrate challenging behaviour but staff manage them extremely well. They make sure that they do not affect the learning of others. Excellent relationships are apparent and children feel confident and secure within a well ordered learning environment.

22. Staff make good use of most available resources to support their teaching. For example, information and communications technology is used by teachers to improve the curriculum much more effectively than when the school was last inspected. Software is carefully selected which supports the topics that are being covered and staff are more confident.

23. Very good use is made of links with parents to support and extend children's learning. Many parents help in school on a regular basis and staff work closely with any parent who has specific concerns. The very good relationships with parents help children to consolidate their learning at home.

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

24. The curriculum, which covers all the areas of learning, prepares children well for the next stage of education. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities, with effective emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. However, the provision for physical activities outdoors is not given a high enough priority.

25. The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Curriculum documentation has improved and is being brought in line with, The Early Learning Goals, the national guidelines for children under the age of six years. Curriculum planning is better because the system has been redesigned to include a two year cycle, to ensure that all children, including those who attend the nursery for four or five terms, will make steady progress. Plans are clearer now, identifying what all children should learn and achieve.

26. All staff are involved in planning the curriculum which provides a clear structure for the organisation and management of both sections of the nursery. A high priority is given to the teaching of mathematical skills as well as early reading and writing skills. These are now carefully planned so that they are included throughout the activities the children undertake. However, the planning for physical skill development outdoors is not consistent and not always as detailed and helpful to the teaching and learning as it is for other curriculum areas.

27. Frequent opportunities are provided for children to make choices, take decisions and develop as independent learners. Children are treated as individuals, boys and girls have the same choices and show similar interests in all activities. Good support is given to the children with special educational needs to ensure they receive appropriate learning experiences. They make good progress towards the identified skills and experiences outlined in their individual educational plans. Teachers, support staff and agencies work closely with the parents of these children. All are well informed of the children's progress. Staff are aware of children learning English as an additional language and help them to gain

confidence to communicate. Sensitive support by the staff, for example, giving them time to converse or explaining instructions carefully, ensures the children can take part in their chosen activities and have equal opportunities throughout the nursery.

28. Children are taken on a wide range of educational visits, such as to the park, to the farm, the library and swimming baths. These broaden and enrich the children's knowledge and learning. Regular visits to homes for senior citizens within the community also make a significant contribution to the children's learning. They take Harvest gifts, for example, sing seasonal songs and carols at Christmas and invite their established friends to the school barbecue. All children, especially those with no extended family living locally, benefit greatly from these experiences.

29. The school works hard and is effective in establishing valuable links with partner schools. Children transferring to primary schools and to the special school benefit from these. Comprehensive, individual records help 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.

30. The school makes good provision for children's personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for children's spiritual development is good. It is clearly promoted through a wide range of planned activities; for example, children plant crocus bulbs in pots as presents for their mothers. They look in amazement at the bulbs and then at the picture of the flowers that will grow. Children spontaneously stop and observe the many school pets. Staff use moments well to give children time to reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world. This is an improvement from the last inspection when opportunities for reflection were not evident.

31. The provision for moral and social development is also good. The school is successful in helping children to understand the difference between right and wrong. Adults teach children to behave with self control, be tolerant, courteous and have good manners. All learn about sharing and caring and are keen to help others. Children are interested and courteous to visitors, greeting them warmly when they arrive. They bring them library books to look at while they are watching the activities. Children are encouraged to take responsibility by helping to tidy up and clear away.

32. The provision for children's cultural development is good. The curriculum extends children's awareness and knowledge of their own culture and that of others very well. This is an improvement from the last inspection when it was judged that children were not prepared for life in a multi cultural society. Respect for, and valuing of, other cultures is introduced through the celebration of festivals and special days, such as Eid and the Chinese New Year as well as Christmas, Easter, birthdays and Mother's Day. Parents are invited to come to school to cook traditional food for Eid, for example, so that children can experience a variety of different types of food. The school makes effective use of a good selection of multicultural resources to extend children's understanding of the diversity of other cultures.

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

33. Pastoral care in the school is satisfactory overall. It has several areas of strength and one weakness. The headteacher and staff provide a warm and friendly learning environment for children that their parents value highly.

34. Secure child protection arrangements are in place and are known to all adults working in the school. The general welfare of children takes a high priority and staff know each child very well. The detailed induction programme, coupled with thorough assessments during the first few weeks in school ensures staff are well aware of the needs of each child. This helps them to achieve well as soon as



they join the school. Staff address any requirements of children with particular physical or educational needs very well. These children are carefully monitored and support is provided to ensure they make the best possible progress. Parents are in daily touch and are fully aware of the individual education plan drawn up for their child. They are given guidance by staff as to how they can support their child's learning and development most effectively. Teachers often discuss events that have occurred during the session with parents as they collect their children. This ensures any problems are dealt with immediately.

35. Issues of health and safety are usually well considered. First aid arrangements are well organised and staff are aware of any medical or physical needs of children. However, the height and length of the fence at the edge of the upper outdoor play area needs to be increased immediately to ensure children can play safely without direct adult supervision. It is currently too low and does not extend right to the end of the grass. This is a particular concern as the fence is adjacent to steep steps which lead down to the lower garden area.

36. Assessment procedures are good and are used well by staff to plan future work. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve assessment systems and how the information they generate is used. Initial assessments of children made when they begin school form a basis on which staff and parents can judge how much progress they make during their time at school. Staff build up a comprehensive "child profile" throughout the year which shows what each child can do. There is also a file of work completed by each child. Staff use this information to keep parents very well informed during the school year about what their children can do. Parents are also able to look at their own children's file at any time during the year. Staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress. Targets and planning are altered to take into account the needs of individual children.

37. The school operates very effective procedures for the educational and personal support and guidance of its children. The very positive relationships staff foster with parents enables the school to know a great deal about the strengths and weaknesses of each child. When combined with the information staff assessments generate, adults are very well placed to offer appropriate support to meet the needs of the children. Outside support agencies are used when needed and the school employs a number of support staff to meet the needs of particular children within the school at any time. This helps to ensure that all children are able to make good progress in their learning.

38. The headteacher is diligent in her monitoring of children's attendance and procedures are good. She works closely with the education welfare officer when any children give cause for concern. The majority of children are brought to school regularly; the school is careful to emphasise the importance of regular attendance during the comprehensive induction programme.

39. There are excellent systems in place to ensure children's behaviour is of the highest order. All adults consistently apply the simple but effective rules governing children's conduct in the school. Children are very aware of these high expectations and their behaviour is consistently excellent. Staff encourage children to respect the opinions of others and to listen carefully when someone is speaking.

40. Standards of pastoral care are similar to those reported at the previous inspection. Assessment procedures have improved considerably since that time.

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

41. Parents express a range of very positive comments about all aspects of the school's educational and social provision for their children. Evidence from parental responses to the inspection questionnaire and the views expressed at the parents' meeting and to inspectors during the inspection,

shows parents feel very well informed about what is happening in school and the progress their children are making.

42. The school maintains a very good range of links with parents and carers which help to ensure good communication about the school and its ethos and routines. Staff encourage parents to visit the nursery before their children take up a place and they also remain with their children during the first sessions of the new school year. This helps children to settle more easily. The school invites parents to attend special celebrations at Christmas and Easter and some accompany children on educational visits. Documentation is carefully written for parents so that they have a very good understanding of what the school does and the expectations the school has of both parents and children; this helps to involve parents in the life of the school. The comprehensive child profiles are always available for parents to view and the end of year reports are detailed and very informative. Day-to-day concerns are dealt with by staff on an informal basis at the beginning and end of sessions, when parents feel happy to approach staff with any questions.

43. Parental involvement in the work of the school is outstanding and makes an excellent contribution to children's learning, both at home and in school. The headteacher and staff recognise how committed parents are to the school and to their children's education. More than one third of parents regularly help in school – indeed, it is a major task to draw up the helpers' rota each term. The school publishes a very useful booklet for parent helpers, setting out how they can help and what the school expects. Parents are very keen to share their own personal expertise with the children. During the inspection, for example, one parent spent most of one morning session investigating with small groups of children what happens to dry pasta when placed in water. Towards the end of the morning, she swapped roles and played her clarinet to a larger group of children. They were able to listen to the sound the instrument made and then enjoyed singing a lullaby "Rock a bye Baby" with her accompanying them.

44. An unusually high number of parents take advantage of the curriculum workshops the school arranges – virtually everyone attends and this enables parents to understand what their children are learning in school and how best they can support this learning at home.

45. High standards in home school links were reported during the last inspection. Since then, the school has worked hard to maintain this very good communication and to improve still further the very positive contribution made by parents.

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

46. The acting headteacher was only appointed at the beginning of the term but already provides effective leadership, building on the good systems set up by the previous headteacher. She has set clear educational direction for the school and maintains a positive ethos. This has been achieved through strong teamwork and the way in which all staff are able to contribute to making decisions. For example, the school development plan provides a clear picture of how the school will progress in the future and lists all the priorities. This helps to make it a valuable document as it sets out detailed targets for improvement over a longer timescale. The plan is much better than when the school was last inspected now that it has close links with finance and agreed priorities can be carefully costed. At present there is no measure of how effective the spending has been and what effect it has had on standards or the quality of education provided.

47. 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 such great care and consideration for one another.

48. The governors take a keen interest in the school's work. They are involved in shaping its future and take an active part in many of its daily activities. For example, the chair visits regularly and the vice chair works with groups of children on a weekly basis. They know the school well and the governing body fulfils all its statutory responsibilities.

49. The school keeps a close check on the progress that children make. The acting headteacher has started good systems which allow staff to evaluate how successful their teaching has been and, if necessary, change what they plan to do next. Good use is made of information collected from parents when children start school. It enables staff to offer extra support to those children who require it and monitor the progress they make during the year. The acting headteacher has also produced accurate statistics which allow her to compare the performance of different year groups and then change the curriculum emphasis if weaknesses are spotted.

50. Systems for monitoring the planning and teaching have improved. There is a strong commitment to improving the quality of the teaching and children's learning. For example, all staff meet to discuss how each topic will be organized and then to evaluate how successful they have been.

51. Communication systems used within the school are good. It consults parents, listens to their views and responds to suggestions. The school operates very 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. There is wide consultation undertaken when financial decisions are being made.

52. There are suitable numbers of well qualified and experienced staff to teach the children. Funds allocated to special needs are used to good effect in providing extra support for children with specific problems.

53. Resources are good for most areas of learning. They are well used and thoughtfully organised so that children can choose for themselves, helping them to become more independent. The exception is in the quality of resources for outdoor play which are only adequate. Some of the equipment needs to be replaced and its organisation needs to be improved so that children get regular opportunities to improve their skills in physical development. Accommodation, both indoors and out, is good and spacious. The learning environment is improved through thoughtful displays which celebrate children's work and achievements.

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

- (1) Raise standards and improve the teaching in physical development outdoors by:
  - Using the outside area more often
  - Including more detail in the planning produced by all the staff
  - Ensuring that adults working with children outside focus on improving children's skills
  - Providing a better range of apparatus for children to use  
(*paragraphs 7, 20, 26, 93*)
- (2) Check what impact spending decisions have on the standards children achieve and the quality of education they receive.  
(*paragraph 46*)
- (3) Ensure that fencing adjacent to the steps outside is made secure and prevents unaccompanied access by children.  
(*paragraph 35*)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	50
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
-	10	75	15	-	-	-

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	65
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	Na

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	158

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

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	195821
Total expenditure	194925
Expenditure per pupil	2953
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	896

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	132
Number of questionnaires returned	78

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	93	7			
My child is making good progress in school.	77	20			3
Behaviour in the school is good.	81	17			1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	24	3		11
The teaching is good.	92	8			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	81	17		1	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	97	3			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	29	1		3
The school works closely with parents.	79	20			
The school is well led and managed.	92	8			-
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	20			1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	15	3		5

### **Parental comments:**

- ❖ A happy, caring nursery
- ❖ Children love coming to school
- ❖ Warm and friendly atmosphere
- ❖ Provides a good education
- ❖ Prepares children well for full time education
- ❖ An excellent nursery school
- ❖ Staff genuinely care about the progress and well being of each individual child

## **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**

54. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is given a high priority. Some children enter with fewer skills than expected for their age, but due to the good teaching and excellent relationships, they make rapid progress. Children quickly learn the daily routines and grow in confidence. This progress is continued throughout the nursery so that by the time they transfer to the next school, the majority are on line to exceed the national expectation for children of this age. Children with special educational needs make good progress helped by the staff's high expectations and effective support.

55. Those who are learning English as an additional language make a similarly good rate of progress. They are confident and assured because staff encourage them to try new ideas without any fears of making a mistake.

56. Children are happy to come to school and get on with the day's activities. They have formed good relationships with all the adults in the nursery and respond positively to praise and are respectful to adults. Children enjoy each other's company and play well together either in small groups when baking or in much larger groups for music. When sharing popular activities such as the dressing up trolley and home corner, most respect the rights of other children and willingly give them a fair turn. Children take turns to wear the feather boa and wedding hat, for example, wait patiently for the gold dress and enjoy sharing all the dressing up clothes with their friends.

57. Most children quickly learn to be independent. They put on aprons, help to tidy up and are responsible for their own coats and belongings. Well established routines ensure that few children need help with the toilet or to wash and dry their hands.

58. Children are encouraged to be helpful to each other, for example, assisting the children with special educational needs as they move around the nursery by moving chairs out of the way and bringing their special seats.

59. All children are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and understand the code of behaviour. They behave particularly well and all show increasing confidence in the nursery setting. They listen intently to instructions and participate enthusiastically in the carefully prepared activities. They are able to select an activity for themselves and use the equipment and the resources with great care. They persevere and concentrate with tasks for some considerable time. Some children are confident enough to share their experiences with others. For example, children making models from wood and nails shared the excitement of the experience. They brought their friends to listen to the noise the hammer made as it knocks in the nail. They told them how heavy the hammer was and then confidently shared the experience with the adult and visitor.

60. Most children are becoming aware of other's feelings and how their own actions affect others. A group of children quickly alerted an adult, for example, when a girl fell off her chair, banging her chin. When she returned to the group, a child sat with her arm round her until she felt better.

61. Children take good care of the school and its equipment. They treat living things, such as the school guinea pigs, stick insects and tanks of fish with care and concern, ensuring that they have appropriate peace and quiet in a busy nursery.

62. The quality of the teaching in personal, social and emotional development is good. It is incorporated into activities planned for all areas of learning. The staff put great emphasis on developing children's



self esteem and social awareness. This results in good attitudes to learning with the children starting each day eager to learn and explore the activities provided. A very good understanding of how young children learn is evident and all are patient and kind with the children, especially those who are young and those who have English as an additional language, giving them plenty of time to answer questions and develop confidence. All staff are aware and very supportive of those with special educational needs and ensure that they work successfully and make good progress.

63. Careful assessments successfully note the children's personal, social and emotional development so that individual needs for support or opportunities are not overlooked.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

64. By the time they leave nursery, children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is likely to be in line with the standard expected, with a small percentage of higher attainers exceeding this. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection and children make good progress during their time at the school.

65. This area of the curriculum is given a suitably high priority within the nursery and good opportunities are provided to consolidate and practise what children have learned.

66. Children are exceptionally good listeners. At the beginning of each session, they meet to welcome each other and are given opportunities to share news. They listen attentively to their classmates' contributions or to the instructions that they have been given. Their ability to listen for long periods and then respond to instructions is particularly impressive. When they come together on such occasions these skills are reinforced and practised. For example, one group listened carefully to a story about a hedgehog told by their teacher. This was part of a follow up activity linked to the letter of the week "h". Each member of their group was able to make a contribution which was valued. The adult asked questions in such a way that each one was skilfully matched to the individual needs of the group members. This meant that everyone could be successful but none found the tasks too easy. This is an improvement on the last inspection when some of the work for higher attainers was too easy.

67. Despite some children arriving in school with delays in their language development, most are able to express themselves confidently and they enjoy taking an active part in imaginative play. For example, some children recreated a supermarket in their classroom complete with cash registers and shop assistants. They sustained their play for a long time, involved each member of their group, shared resources and took turns. Their language skills improved on these occasions, because the adult working with them was able to offer good ideas on how their role play might develop. She also made sure the activities stayed purposeful and built in valuable links with other curriculum areas. An example of this was the way in which children added up how much their purchases might cost and then talked about some of the places in the world where good might originate.

68. 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. This is a particular feature of the school and children are encouraged to enjoy and value books. They understand that words and pictures convey a meaning. Most children can recognise their own names and select their name cards when they arrive for each session. Many can identify some of the letters of their name in writing and displays around the nursery and can talk about books they have enjoyed listening to and retell their favourite stories.

69. Most children's writing skills are at a very early stage of development with the majority only just having arrived in school. Nevertheless, they are confident enough to make attempts at writing their own names unaided and a small number manage to do this when they complete a piece of work.

Writing features across the curriculum and children are keen to talk about their writing in their imaginative play and when they use the well equipped writing table.

70. Children respond very well to the lessons. They concentrate well and stay on a task until it has been completed and this contributes to the good standards they achieve. Children make good progress in their learning. This is because staff encourage them, expect a lot of them and constantly ask them to think about other words they might use. They know the children well and set them work which is at the right level and suitably demanding. Children are able to follow their own interests but staff organise their work in such a way that children build on what they already know and they have regular opportunities to consolidate their learning.

71. Children who are identified as having special educational needs receive a very good level of skilled, adult support. They have detailed 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 with a boy who has learning difficulties. He found it hard to communicate and had a short attention span but the adult working with him kept him actively involved in an extensive range of interesting tasks. His successes are celebrated by both the adults and classmates who are kind and considerate. This helps to build his confidence within a safe and secure environment where his contribution is valued.

72. The small number of children who are learning English as an additional language are also well supported. They receive regular help to ensure they can take a full and active part in the whole curriculum that the school offers. Their language development improves as a result of this.

73. The quality of the teaching is good overall. A quarter of lessons observed were very good, another three fifths were good and the remainder were satisfactory. The quality of teaching is better than when the school was last inspected. On that occasion, the pace of some lessons was too slow. Teachers' planning has also improved. It sets out more clearly what the teacher expects children to achieve during an activity. This was lacking last time and now supports the teachers' work more effectively. The planning also sets out work for children of different levels of prior attainment. This means that all children, regardless of gender or ability, learn well and make good progress. Teachers also keep a better check on what children have learned and use this information well to organise what comes next.

### **Mathematical Development**

74. Overall children make good progress and most are on course to meet the expected standard by the time they leave. Standards for higher attaining children have improved since the last inspection and children's ability to use their mathematical knowledge in practical situations is now much better. 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.

75. Many of the children can count to ten and a few can count higher than this. They use their knowledge of number rhymes and counting games to reinforce this learning. The school has been successful in introducing elements of the national numeracy strategy, such as regular mental arithmetic sessions. This was well illustrated during "welcome time" when children were asked to work out how many of their friends were present and how many milk cartons would be left over. Most could count accurately and then recognise the figures that the adult wrote. Some higher attainers were able to work out simple sums, using these same figures, and then apply their knowledge to other calculations such as how many children should be allowed to go into the home corner.

76. Children are good at using simple mathematical language when they talk about quantities such as heavier and lighter. They learn about shapes and many are able to sort objects and put them in order using colour or shape to separate them. Some higher attainers can then calculate how many objects they have collected. They were given few opportunities to try this when the school was last inspected so this is an improvement. Children are good at making comparisons and can recognise bigger and smaller objects around the nursery. They can also identify patterns and recreate some for themselves. For example, one group was able to recognise patterns that could be found in carpets and curtains.

77. 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 changed when it is necessary to adapt their work. Individual records indicate that the progress they make is consistent throughout their time in nursery.

78. Children behave well and are keen to succeed. They work well together, sharing and taking turns when necessary. When they are required to work together to complete their tasks, they do so sensibly. Their keenness and cooperation are significant factors in helping them reach the standards that they do.

79. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good in three quarters of lessons and the rest is very good. These are much higher figures than when the school was last inspected. As a result of this successful teaching, children learn more quickly and achieve higher standards. Teachers make good use of everyday opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills and link their planning to current topics. For example, a teacher working with a group of children looked at the patterns and shapes created by the leaves that they had collected on their way to school. Children were able to group the leaves according to different criteria and then count how many they had collected. Adults working with them introduced mathematical language slowly and sensitively making sure each group member was able to answer questions at their own level. Children were confident enough to take a risk even if they were not sure of the answer because they knew their group leader was always going to help and encourage them.

80. Planning is better than when the school was last inspected now that clear objectives are set for each lesson. Staff regularly monitor how effective their teaching has been by checking on what children have learnt by the end of an activity. This enables them to plan the next phase of work more accurately and this keeps children's learning purposeful.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

81. The majority of children are on course to reach the expected standard by the time they leave nursery. They are provided with many good opportunities for learning through planned and well organised classroom activities. They respond well to these. Standards are similar to those found during the last inspection.

82. Children are beginning to understand simple scientific processes. They learn to observe carefully and describe accurately what they see. For example, in one lesson they planted bulbs in soil and discussed what might happen in the weeks and months ahead. They were able to explain how they might record the changes and predict what would happen if the bulbs were deprived of water. On another occasion, a small group used magnets to collect different materials and began to realise which ones were attracted.

83. 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 joined blocks of wood using a hammer and nails. They could all explain what they wanted to achieve and knew what they needed to do to keep themselves safe.

84. Another positive feature of children's work in this area is the way in which they are able to talk about their family and friends. One girl talked excitedly about her baby brother who had just been born and her classmates all contributed to the conversation, describing their own families. Many children can recognise features of their local area, know part of their address and 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, Chinese New Year and Eid are celebrated.

85. Children have very good levels of concentration and behaviour and this has a positive impact on the quality of their work. 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.

86. Children are now much more confident in their use of information technology. When working on the computer, they know that moving the mouse will make changes on the screen. and many show good levels of competence in selecting from different options. All children, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress. This is due to well planned and interesting lessons, which have clear learning objectives and are adapted to meet the needs of individual children.

87. Two thirds of the teaching in this area is good with the remainder satisfactory. Staff set up activities which are interesting and keep children involved for long periods. 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 after children had planted their bulbs in soil. They were then encouraged to apply this knowledge using a "matching" program on the computer which required them to put "growing" plants in order of size.

### **Physical development**

88. Children generally achieve standards in line with national expectations. This is similar to the standards achieved during the last inspection.

89. Indoors, children are able to move confidently about the classrooms as they complete activities. Most children show competence with paintbrushes, pencils, felt pens and glue spreaders. They fit train tracks together accurately. At the woodwork bench, they use tools carefully and hammer nails with some success. This provides them with good opportunities for developing physical skills and control. Most children demonstrate an awareness of space and increasing control and co-ordination as they move to music, jumping and shaking their arms and legs in time to the rhythm.

90. When playing outside, children can pedal and steer wheeled vehicles with some accuracy. Some children can swing using their legs to increase the momentum whilst others can throw and catch large balls.

91. During the inspection, there were no climbing or balancing activities seen.

92. The quality of teaching is good in over three quarters of lessons and the rest is satisfactory. The teaching of physical skill development, indoors, is good. Planning for all activities indoors is clear with details of the skill to be developed and the vocabulary to be used. All the staff have a good knowledge

of the needs and abilities of the children. Activities are well organised with the adult role clearly focused on the skill to be developed. For example, the adult supporting children working at the creative table, ensured that all children held the paint rollers correctly when painting pictures of hedgehogs. All children are taught to use a variety of tools and implements purposefully and safely.

93. However, the teaching outdoors is less successful because it is not given a high enough priority throughout the school. Lessons are planned but this planning does not have sufficient detail to support the teaching. For example, a large number of children riding bikes in one area were reminded of safety rules but some opportunities to develop steering and stopping and starting skills were missed. The school has adequate resources to develop physical skills but some resources, outdoors, are well worn. The acting headteacher has already identified improving children's physical skills outside as a priority.

### **Creative Development**

94. Children's creative development is in line to meet the expected level by the time they leave the nursery. This is similar to the attainment found in the previous inspection. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in developing their imaginative and creative skills.

95. Children become very involved in creative activities. They enjoy the freedom to express ideas and feelings and make discoveries. They have many opportunities draw, print and paint. They use a range of materials to create pictures, models and collages, showing skill in combining fabrics, wood and feathers. Children enjoy music. They experiment successfully with a wide range of percussion instruments and can play in time to the piano. They all sing with great enthusiasm, recognising and joining in with familiar action songs and nursery rhymes. Children are introduced to other musical instruments. For example, they listen to a mother playing a clarinet and can recognise high and low notes. They can sing quietly to the clarinet as they sing a lullaby. Many can talk about the instrument, describing its appearance and the skill needed to play it. Children develop their imagination and ability to express themselves through the role play situations which have been set up for them; the supermarket and the home play areas. Children talk about what they are doing, dress up and can act out the different roles successfully. Staff are involved in the role play, supporting the children as they write their shopping lists and extending the play by introducing new vocabulary.

96. Work covered in this area of learning makes a strong contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Adults have a good knowledge of the skills and creative experiences relevant to children of this age. Activities which provide different learning opportunities are prepared, managed and supervised well. A good balance of activities is provided with some directed by adults and others chosen by the child.

97. The quality of teaching in over three quarters of lessons is good and the rest is satisfactory. Where the teaching is good, praise is used effectively to encourage and support the children. Adults encourage children to experiment and help them to develop their ideas further. For example, children making models of hedgehogs were praised as they selected an appropriate shape of potato for the body, then selected and inserted matchsticks for spines. They were encouraged to concentrate and persevere when adding screwed up tissue paper for the grass base. In this way, children make good progress. Where the teaching is more ordinary, adults place too much emphasis on the finished product. An example of this was seen when children were making a collage. They were adequately supported as they selected a variety of resources, but were given few opportunities to experiment. On this occasion, their rate of progress was slower than during the more successful lessons.

98. Staff are good at assessing what children can do and keep examples of their drawing and paintings in each child's file. These pieces of work provide parents with useful information about their child's progress. Attractive displays around the nursery reflect the value staff place on the children's work.