

INSPECTION REPORT

ST EDMUNDS NURSERY SCHOOL

BRADFORD

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107190

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Greenwood

Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett
1569

Dates of inspection: Monday 2nd – Tuesday 3rd October 2000

Inspection number: 224487

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:	Bingley Street Brownroyd Bradford
Postcode:	BD8 9AH
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Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	Bradford LEA
Date of previous inspection:	4 th November 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edmunds Nursery School is an average sized nursery school providing education for 71 children aged between three and five years. Thirty-three attend full time with the other thirty-eight coming part time. The school is oversubscribed and has a long waiting list. No children have statements of special educational need and a very small percentage is identified by the school as requiring additional support. Around half the children of the current intake come from homes where English is not the first language. This represents a significant change from the last inspection when the figure was one in five. The majority of children come from the immediate area of the school. They live in a mixture of owner occupied and rented accommodation of different types. The school uses its own screening materials to check children's attainment on entry. Increasing numbers are arriving with limited speaking skills and, overall, attainment is below that expected of children of this age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with a number of excellent features. Most children will achieve the expected standards before they leave and about half will exceed them. They make very good progress during their time in nursery and this is due to very good teaching, decisive leadership and the effective contribution made by all staff. The school provides a very good basis for children's future learning. It does not have a delegated budget and, therefore, no judgement is made about value for money. However, the very many significant strengths of the school far outweigh those areas that could be improved. The school development plan clearly highlights what the school will be doing next and forms an effective basis for future improvement.

What the school does well

- Ensures children of all abilities make very good progress.
- The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and this enables children to learn quickly.
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher.
- Children develop very positive attitudes.
- An excellent partnership exists between parents, carers and school staff.

What could be improved

- Arrangements for checking on registration and children's attendance are not tight enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then it has made good progress in many areas. High standards have been maintained in the intervening years and some areas have been improved. The level of very good teaching is much higher. Better opportunities have been arranged to improve children's spiritual awareness now this is included in teachers' planning. Children achieve higher standards in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). They are more confident when they use computers and staff have provided a better range of software which is suitable for

children of this age. More work is still needed in this area. The school has set clear and realistic targets for the future and is well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

Children arrive in nursery with a wide range of pre school experiences. The majority enter with standards that are below average when compared to children of a similar age. This is particularly true in their personal and social development and in their linguistic skills, with many children learning English for the first time. They make rapid progress during their time in school so that by the time they leave, the majority are on line to reach, with about half likely to exceed, the standard expected for children of a similar age. Children achieve consistently well across all areas of learning. This is because children are very keen to learn, they are encouraged to be independent and are very well taught by staff who understand their individual needs. Children with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Similarly, those who are learning English as an additional language receive very good teaching from all staff, including bilingual assistants, who work hard to ensure children are able experience all areas of the curriculum. Personal development is very good. Children collaborate readily in activities; they show a good understanding of each other's needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children look forward to nursery and attend very regularly. They are enthusiastic and confident and the new intake settle quickly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is excellent both inside and outdoors. Children respond very well to the high expectations of the staff.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships are central to the success enjoyed by the school. Children's response to any opportunities to extend their personal development is excellent.
Attendance	Attendance levels are very good for nursery age children but systems for registering their attendance are not tight enough.

The children copy the very good example set by the headteacher and staff. Children approach activities with great purpose and increasing levels of independence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Very 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.

The quality of teaching is very good and better than when the school was last inspected. A tenth of lessons seen were excellent, six out of ten lessons were very good and the rest were good. None was judged to be unsatisfactory. This high quality teaching is seen across all areas of learning but teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is particularly effective. Teachers demonstrate very good knowledge of the learning needs of nursery children. Story times are used well to help children to develop a love of language and literature and an understanding of the structure of books. The teaching is so good because all staff combine to prepare thoroughly and

imaginatively; they set demanding work for the children to do. They also form very good relationships which encourages children to try their best while working within an attractive learning environment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a very good range of stimulating learning activities both indoors and out. The curriculum is well planned and ensures that all children have equal access to high quality learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision is made for children who have special educational needs. The support offered by the school is well organised and helps to ensure that children make consistently good progress. Individual plans offer detailed guidelines on what children should achieve and how staff will help them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Over half the children are learning English as an additional language. Bilingual staff work with individuals and groups to ensure they can access the full curriculum range. They are very effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good in all these areas. Positive staff relationships with children encourage them to become mature, responsible and sociable. They learn to reflect on their actions and care for others. Children's spiritual and cultural development is also well supported.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff are very conscientious in their duty of care. Most aspects of provision for children's well-being are very good. Procedures for keeping registers and checking on attendance are not rigorous enough and need to be tightened up.

The nursery welcomes parents and carers at all times. Links with families are very good and the quality and range of the information they receive is exceptional. This has a very beneficial effect on children's learning because parents are valued partners in their children's education, reinforcing and complementing the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of the leadership and management of the school is very good. The headteacher leads by example and is very effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and children's learning. She has created a positive ethos within the school and provides a clear vision for future development. There is a commitment amongst all staff to achieving high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school has no governing body. A management board oversees the six nursery schools in the area. Officers of the local authority, who are members of the board, visit regularly and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good systems are in place which ensure that the school regularly reviews its own performance. Children's progress is carefully checked and detailed evaluations are completed. These are well used to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and measure how much children are learning. The data collected by the school is also used to check how well the whole year group has performed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of the available resources. The available space is used imaginatively and effectively. Good levels of financial detail are included in the school's development plan and systems are in place to ensure that money is spent wisely.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are high • Teaching is very good and children make very good progress • Children like school, they behave well and are self confident • Home visits are an excellent feature • Staff are approachable and friendly. They respond positively to any concerns that are raised and are keen to help • Bilingual children are given very good support that meets their individual needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No negative comments were received

Inspection findings agree with the parents' positive views. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school which enables a very good dialogue to exist between school and home. Excellent written information is provided about the school and children's detailed records are shared with parents throughout the year. Very effective personal contact between staff and parents is routine and ensures any problems are quickly solved and individual needs of parents and children are sensitively met.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Ensures children of all abilities make very good progress.

1. Many children arrive in nursery with attainment levels lower than expected for their age, particularly in their language skills and in their personal and social development. They catch up rapidly so that by the time they leave, they are on line to achieve standards which meet, and in some cases, exceed the national average. Their learning is successful in all the areas of the curriculum and this results in them making very good progress. Overall, these are better standards than when the school was last inspected.
2. Standards are high because the teaching is so good, the curriculum is very well organised and the children are keen to learn.
3. Early language skills are given a high priority by all staff. Children who are learning English as an additional language are given good levels of individual support so that they are able take part in the full range of curriculum activities. Children are able to practise their writing through a range of opportunities. A very good example of this is the way in which they were encouraged to express themselves through writing. One boy's completed work resembled Urdu script and it formed the centrepiece of an attractive display of children's writing. Valuing his work and celebrating his successes enabled him to make fast progress. This was evident in the work he completed during a later activity.
4. Other children were able to write messages and even compose their own stories using the same strategies they had encountered in the story of "Goldilocks". Some higher attainers retold their stories with a good understanding of story structure and were able to describe the different roles of author and illustrator.
5. Mathematics is well represented in the curriculum in an interesting and stimulating way. Children are given numerous opportunities to learn and apply mathematical skills in a practical and exciting way. This helps them to make fast progress and achieve good standards. They are given tasks which staff plan carefully to meet their individual needs. Children enjoy their lessons but tasks are demanding and they are expected to work at a fast pace. A good example of this was seen when a small group was engaged in building a model using wooden blocks. The adult working with them kept asking questions about the shapes and sizes of the blocks aimed at improving their mathematical knowledge and understanding. She supported them and offered advice but made sure that each group member tried to increase their learning, seldom settling for the first attempt. She also tailored the activity to meet the needs of each group member, making sure the questions matched their stage of development.
6. The settling in period works well because of the successful contacts with families and children before they arrive in school. As a result, there is little delay because children are upset and this helps them to progress quickly. They soon adapt to the routine of the day, make friends and show respect to adults.

The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and this enables children to learn quickly.

7. The quality of the teaching was good when the school was last inspected but it is even better now. Sixty per cent of the teaching is now very good with over ten per cent excellent. Because all activities are carefully planned, adults know the children's individual needs extremely well and the work they set is interesting and enjoyable. Children respond with great enthusiasm and they are very keen to learn. Activities are practically based and the weakness identified at the time of the last inspection in the use of information technology has been tackled successfully. Staff are much more confident and this helps them to guide the children successfully, using a better range of software. They recognise that more work needs to be done, for example in upgrading the computers, which are older models.

8. No time is wasted during the sessions which move at a brisk pace. An example of this is the way in which lunchtime is organised for those children who stay full time. The extended period is carefully structured with all staff, including meal supervisors, recognising the learning opportunities offered by the outdoor area. Staff ask questions which encourage children to express themselves accurately and confidently. They are skilled at ensuring that every group member is able to make a worthwhile contribution. Bilingual staff, working with children learning English as an additional language, demonstrate how successful such an approach can be. In one example, two members of staff discussed the sounds made by different musical instruments, stressing the volume each might make. Every contribution was valued, good progress was made and group members with very little English were confident and assured because of the support they were given. Features such as these contribute significantly to the high standards achieved and the good progress made by the children.

9. During all their activities, children's work remains purposeful because the adults working with them carefully monitor what they are doing. They keep detailed records and note progress that is made so that the level of work can be adjusted in the future. Children with special educational needs, those who are learning English as an additional language and higher attainers are very well taught. This is because information about them is shared during regular staff meetings so that everyone understands children's particular needs. Lessons are carefully planned to suit their individual requirements, often using resources which have been specially prepared for them. A good example of this was seen during a role play activity. The adult working with the children had set up an area in such a way that it stimulated conversations about journeys, hotels and holidays. She adapted the conversation and questioning so that all the group members were able to talk at their own levels of understanding and guided their learning by introducing other relevant resources, for example, "What does this map tell us and how should we use it?" Rapid progress is made on an occasion such as this.

The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher.

10. The headteacher and staff combine effectively to make sure that the school's agreed aims are reflected in its daily life. They are well supported by individual members of the management board which is responsible for overseeing the six nursery schools in the area. The positive climate that has been created makes a significant contribution to the high standards that are achieved. There is a commitment to enabling all children to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment levels and very good systems are in place to make sure this happens. The headteacher is actively involved in the teaching process and leads by example. She is an outstanding teacher and this sets the standards for the rest of the staff who respond enthusiastically. An example of this is the way in which all staff are involved in planning, delivering and then checking how successful their teaching has been. Effective systems such as these help to ensure that there is a consistency of approach.

11. Another feature of the headteacher's leadership style is that all staff feel confident to make a contribution when decisions are being made and know that their views and opinions will be valued and listened to. A good example of this is the way in which priorities are decided when the school development plan is constructed. Everyone is invited to contribute, the responses are debated and action plans carefully drawn up. The improvements in the teaching of information and communications

technology illustrates how the outcome of this process can be so successful. The provision for this area was criticised in the last inspection report but the school responded imaginatively.

12. Monitoring children's progress and comparing performance is carried out successfully. Good use is made of the information collected to change the way activities are organised so that they benefit all group members. A good example of this is seen in the way in which the school responded to weaknesses in children's personal and social development. These were identified in the data gathered together when they started school. Activities which improved their levels of independence and allowed opportunities to choose were carefully structured so that all children achieved some immediate success. Progress was carefully charted and recorded so that all staff knew how they should respond. Using monitoring systems in such an individual way and targeting particular skills means that children learn more quickly. This, in turn, contributes to the high standards they achieve.

Children develop very positive attitudes and are encouraged to become caring and productive members of society. The attention staff pay to children's personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

13. The vibrant and cheerful learning environment in the school encourages children to make the most of every moment they are there – and they do. They are keen to join in the exciting range of activities offered by staff; for example, some children are really torn as to whether to continue with a particularly engaging painting project or to participate in all the fun outside. Children first attend the school part time but many are desperate to make the transition to full time so that they may stay for lunch. This is a very valuable experience for them all as they take turns to serve each person at their table, say "Thank you" and learn to eat properly with a knife and fork. Even children who have only been to the nursery a few times are settling well and are becoming familiar with most of the routines. This is because staff take great care to address any worries they may have and adopt a very flexible approach about parents and carers staying with their children. The reassuring presence of very supportive bilingual staff also contributes to the very positive attitudes to school these children develop.

14. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Children are at ease in the friendly environment and are sure that adults will always listen to what they are saying and take care of their individual needs. As a result, children are very polite and co-operative during activities. Staff are very committed to encouraging the development of well rounded individuals who relate well to others in a variety of social settings. For example, many children do not have a garden to play in at home, but at the nursery, they experience the pleasures of scrambling over climbing apparatus or digging furiously in the sandpit for the first time. However, they also learn to get the most from these experiences by sharing the resources with their friends, taking turns and looking after the equipment so they can use it the next day as well. Children are particularly good at taking care of the school's resources. Staff encourage them to tidy away, not only their own resources but also any left out by others, and they also learn the value of everything used in the school.

15. As well as learning the difference between right and wrong, children are encouraged to reflect on the wonders of the natural world around them. This aspect of the school's work has improved since the last inspection. For example, there is considerable evidence of children giving consideration to the care of living creatures. They raise butterflies, care for them and then set them free. They are able to visit places locally which either attract butterflies or create a natural habitat for them and they marvel at their colours and movements. Children take turns to care for the two nursery teddies, keeping them at home and sometimes making a photographic record of their stay. All these aspects of the school's provision help children to learn to think beyond their own personal needs and to begin to become caring members of the community.

16. Children enjoy the opportunities they are offered to experience the customs of others who have a different cultural heritage. They participate in major festivals such as Eid and develop an awareness and respect for the beliefs and values of others. Children accept happily that some of their friends do not eat the same food at lunchtimes but that they can all share the same table and enjoy a very pleasant social occasion together. Staff enable this to happen without any fuss; they encourage children to discuss differences so that each may learn from the other.

An excellent partnership exists between parents, carers and school staff which has a very strong impact on the quality of children's learning.

17. The headteacher and staff are committed to including parents and carers in every aspect of the school's work; this helps parents to understand exactly what the school is trying to do, the methods it uses and how they can help their children to settle well and make a good start to their learning.

18. The entrance to the school is totally devoted to communication with parents. Everything they could wish to know about the school's philosophy, curriculum and support systems is displayed in a colourful and accessible format. Excellent information is provided in introductory leaflets about all aspects of the school, from spiritual development to information and communications technology. Care is taken that translations are provided for parents for whom English is not the mother tongue and the bilingual support staff are able interpreters. The school responds directly to parents' comments and concerns and they are very positive about the support the school offers. There is very useful information about how parents can support their children's learning at home which includes, for example, a video on early reading and writing in the home, the impact of male role-models on children's reading and local community education and news.

19. Equally careful thought is given to the quality of feedback the school offers to parents on the progress their children make. Very detailed, on-going records are kept in the classrooms and these are always readily accessible to parents. Regular opportunities are offered to parents to discuss their children's progress with staff. The final written report of the year provides an extremely detailed breakdown of each child's skills along with a thoughtful summary of their personal and social development. Parents are very appreciative of all this information and they value highly the support and help which the staff offer, both to themselves and their children.

20. The very high quality of the relationship the school maintains with parents makes a significant contribution to the standards it achieves.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Arrangements for checking on registration at the start of each session and monitoring attendance during the sessions are not tight enough.

21. Staff provide a high standard of care for the children. Without exception, parents appreciate the way in which all staff know their children well. They are full of praise for the flexible approach taken which caters for individual family needs, allowing some to arrive a little later than the rest. This does not affect children's attainment or their rate of progress but it does present other difficulties that the school must address. Registers are taken at the start of each session and are kept available for staff to amend as children arrive or leave. This is not always done and there are some occasions when there is no overview of how many children are attending. Systems are not tight enough to ensure that accurate figures are always kept. This weakness has been recognised by the school and improvements have already been made.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Tighten the arrangements for registering children's attendance by:
 - (i) Making sure that registers are kept accurately.
 - (ii) Improving systems to monitor those children who arrive late or leave early so that the number attending is known to staff.
(paragraph 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	62	27	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	9

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	3

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	31

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	na
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	na

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	204723
Total expenditure	202313
Expenditure per pupil	3890
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

The school does not have a delegated budget

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	15

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	13			
My child is making good progress in school.	80	20			
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27			
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	33	7	7	
The teaching is good.	87	13			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	87	13			
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33			
The school works closely with parents.	73	2			
The school is well led and managed.	87	13			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	20			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	27	7		

Not all categories received a response so some rows do not total 100

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Very good support for children who achieve high standards
 All staff are approachable, they listen to parents.
 Each child is treated as an individual and becomes confident.
 Parents are made to feel very welcome.
 The school has a very good reputation locally

