

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Newburn Manor Nursery School**

Newburn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle

Unique Reference Number: 108430

Headteacher: Mrs C. Skilbeck

Reporting inspector: Mr P. M. Allen  
OIN 17531

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 224804

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:	2 – 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	41 Townfield Gardens Newburn Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Postcode:	NE15 8PY
Telephone number:	0191 267 6065
Appropriate authority:	Newcastle LEA
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Watson
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P. M. Allen [17531]	Registered inspector	Under fives	What sort of school is it?
		Equal Opportunities	How high are standards?
		Special educational needs	How well are children taught?
		English as an additional language	
Mr P. Berry [11474]	Lay inspector		Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development
			How well does the school care for its children?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs A. Smithers [17456]	Team inspector		How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
			How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Newburn Manor Nursery is an average sized Nursery school situated in a rural area to the north west of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The school is popular and oversubscribed. The children are drawn from a wide area and from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. All the children are of white ethnic origin. Around 20 per cent of the children are eligible for free school meals. There is a small number of children who are currently on the register for special educational needs, although none has a Statement of Special Educational Need. There is a staggered start to school life and when all have been admitted there are 78 children on roll, virtually all of who attend for one year on a full time basis. At the time of the inspection, most children had only been in school for a matter of weeks. Prior to their entry to the nursery the majority of the children have attended local pre-school playgroups. Subsequent to their time in the Nursery, the children transfer to one of around 10 local first schools. Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry, it is broadly in line with what could be expected, except in communication, language and literature where it is below what could be expected for a significant minority. Following a period of uncertainty over the Nursery, its future is now settled and at the time of the inspection was being led by a new headteacher. The school aims to offer first hand experiences delivered in a well structured, varied and stimulating environment in which the children have the opportunities to become confident, competent learners.

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

This is an effective nursery school which provides a good quality of education. Although it has many good features, there are a number of areas for improvement. These are recognised by the recently appointed headteacher who is providing clear, purposeful leadership. The quality of teaching is mainly good and this promotes the good progress most children make. Most children are on course to attain the new nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals for young children and a small number are on course to exceed them. The headteacher and staff are committed to the school and its children, working hard and sharing a vision of how to make this good school better.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- ◆ The very good quality of the leadership is providing clear educational direction.
- ◆ All the staff share a commitment to improve and have the capacity to succeed.
- ◆ There are effective arrangements for planning and assessing using the new Early Learning Goals.
- ◆ The school provides a calm, caring, well organised environment.
- ◆ There is good provision for spiritual and moral development and very good provision for social development.
- ◆ The children are enthusiastic about school, with positive attitudes and good behaviour.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- ◆ Attendance and punctuality.
- ◆ The monitoring of teaching and learning.
- ◆ The external environment.
- ◆ Guidelines for staff which reflect new practice.

*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 shown steady improvement and the issues have largely been addressed. A system of curriculum leadership has been introduced to assist with the development of each of the areas of learning. Although more planned activities to match the abilities of the higher attaining children have been introduced, both in language and literature and in mathematics, there is recognition that more could be done. Improvements since the last inspection include the development of links with parents, in-service training and school improvement planning. There is a shared will to build on the school's strengths through a programme of review and development.

## STANDARDS

The new national Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception year in primary schools (the end of the Foundation Stage). The goals are presented in six areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development; communication language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. The vast majority of children in the Nursery are on course to meet most of the Early Learning Goals across the six areas, although there is a significant minority who may not achieve the higher level competencies prescribed in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. A small number of children will exceed the Early Learning Goals. In the area of physical development attainment is good and many children are likely to achieve standards which are above those expected nationally by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Although the children are new to the Nursery, they show positive attitudes and enthusiasm when participating in the good range of activities.
Behaviour, in and out of the Nursery	Standards of behaviour are usually good both inside the Nursery and during outside play.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. The warm and caring relationships help children to settle in quickly and start to become confident learners.
Attendance	Attendance is poor which results in some children not sufficiently benefiting from the good opportunities for learning provided by the Nursery.

The main issue for the school to address is that concerned with improving attendance and punctuality.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of children:</b>	
Lessons seen overall	Mainly good.

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

The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, very often good and sometimes very good. It was very good in 13 per cent of the activities observed, good in 66 per cent and satisfactory in all the remainder. Teachers and nursery nurses work closely together to provide the good quality of teaching which has a clear impact on the levels of attainment and the progress being made. Teaching is strengthened by the effective arrangements for planning and assessing using the new Early Learning Goals. The teaching meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. Group times provide good opportunities for focused teaching but the arrangements can benefit from review to maximise their effectiveness and ensure that the size of the groups gives most benefit. There are firm plans to introduce structured monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is being planned effectively with reference to the six areas of learning and the new national Early Learning Goals.
Provision for children with special educational needs	As children are settling into school, so the provision for special educational needs is being developed. Evidence suggests that these children are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for spiritual and moral development is good and that for social development is very good. Cultural development is sound. The children respond well in these areas.
How well the school cares for its children	The children are well cared for through the supportive relationships with staff. The school is developing effective ways of monitoring the children's attainment and progress.

The school needs to work closely with parents to improve attendance. Parents hold the school in very high regard. The school's good systems for monitoring progress are strengthening the quality of teaching.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very good quality of the leadership is providing clear educational direction involving a number of changes. There is a need to develop guidelines for staff to reflect new practices.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Although the governors are supportive of the school, a more structured involvement can enable the governing body to take a more effective role. There needs to be a review of the present admission arrangements by which there is a staggered start to school life.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a good commitment to self-review and evaluation and the new headteacher has firm plans to put structured procedures in place.
The strategic use of resources	The school's decisions on spending relate very clearly to priorities for improvement. Financial resources are carefully managed, giving appropriate consideration to the principles of best value.

The school is well staffed and benefits from good quality clean accommodation. Although it is mainly well resourced, recent audits are leading to resource developments in a number of areas, such as that for outside play. This can contribute to the programme of improvement of the external environment.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Six parents attended the meeting and only 14 parents responded to the questionnaire. The views and opinions represented are, therefore, those of a minority of parents.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Children like school and behave well.</li> <li>◆ The teaching is good.</li> <li>◆ The information given on children's progress.</li> <li>◆ The school is helping the children to become responsible.</li> <li>◆ The school is well managed and approachable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ There was no evidence of areas which the parents would like to see improved.</li> </ul>

Some parents wanted reassurance that children living in the immediate area have priority for places in school. The school is reviewing this point. All parents consulted hold the school in high regard and inspectors support their judgement that this is a good school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to the Nursery, there is a wide range in abilities and experiences. Although some children have good language and social skills, others have less well developed learning and social skills and some have poor speaking skills. Nevertheless, attainment overall is broadly in line with what could be expected, except in communication, language and literacy where for a significant minority it is below what could be expected.
2. The new national Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception year in primary schools (the end of the Foundation Stage). The goals are presented in six areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development; communication language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.
3. The vast majority of children in the Nursery are on course to meet most of the Early Learning Goals across the six areas, although there is a significant minority who may not achieve the higher level competencies prescribed in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. A small number of children will exceed the Early Learning Goals. In the area of physical development attainment is good and many children are likely to achieve standards which are above those expected nationally by the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards across the six areas are similar to those described in the previous report.
4. At the time of the inspection most children had attended the Nursery for a relatively short time and were still developing relationships with staff and other children. They were gaining an understanding of nursery routines and systems. Appropriately, the staff place considerable emphasis on this area and its importance is reflected in the planning across all activities. The children are adapting well and beginning to respond well to the high expectations made of them. Children make good progress gaining confidence to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak within a familiar group. Children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals and a small number will exceed them.
5. In communication, language and literacy good opportunities are provided to practise the elements of speaking and listening, reading and writing and these areas are given appropriate emphasis through the wide range of experiences on offer. Most children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. A significant minority may not achieve the higher level competencies prescribed; for example, those concerned with understanding elements of stories and exploring and experimenting with sounds, words and texts. The small number of children who have particularly good language and communication skills are likely to exceed the goals. Children are generally making good progress through the 'stepping stones' which lead to the goals.
6. In the area of mathematical development, the majority of children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. A significant minority may not achieve the higher level competencies prescribed, such as being able to use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. A small number of children will exceed the targets set. The majority of children show an interest in numbers and counting and use number names and language spontaneously. They make good progress through effective teaching and learning; children enjoy all the purposeful activities provided for them in the Nursery.

7. The majority of children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world. A small number will exceed the goals, although in the aspect concerned with observing, finding out about and identifying features in the place in which they live and the natural world, attainment is particularly good; this upholds the judgement made in the previous report. Children attain well in this area, largely through the good opportunities they are given to study their own environment, through purposeful local walks and through good opportunities to visit places further afield. The children are enthusiastic to learn and generally make good progress across the various aspects of this area of learning. They are beginning to make good progress in information and communication technology, an area which is being effectively developed, partly through staff development and partly through the creation of a very useful 'software map' identifying programs to support learning across the six areas.

8. Attainment in the area of physical development is good and many children are likely to achieve standards which are above those expected nationally by the end of the Foundation Stage. The high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Children make good progress due to the effective learning environment that is safe and well planned with opportunities to develop their physical skills both indoor and out. They are beginning to handle tools, objects and different types of materials safely and with control. When using soft play apparatus, they demonstrate skills of rolling, jumping, sliding and crawling. There are firm plans to significantly develop the outdoor area so that it better supports this aspect of physical development, thus promoting even higher standards.

9. In the area of creative development, children are in line to achieve the appropriate goals, and a smaller number will exceed them. Children are beginning to differentiate colours and the majority recognise red, yellow, blue and green. They are beginning to explore colour, texture, shape, form and space and are starting to use their imagination in art, music, role-play and stories. Learning is effective and children make good progress mainly through the quality of teaching which is good. In this area as in the others, the school is preparing the children well for the next stage in their education.

### **Children's attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Children's attitudes to learning are good. They listen attentively to their teachers and are able to sit quietly when listening to stories. Children enjoy the activities and respond enthusiastically when faced with challenging tasks; for example, when asked to match objects by colour or by shape. All the parents spoken to were very supportive, with unanimous agreement that their children had settled in quickly and liked school.

11. The standard of behaviour is good. Although the children had only been in school for a short time, they were responding well to instructions; for example, the children kept to an orderly line and walked in pairs when visiting the community centre and obeyed the nursery nurse by keeping well away from the kerb. The school has a calm and harmonious atmosphere.

12. Relationships are good both between children and adults and between the children themselves. The children are able to work well individually or collaboratively, sharing resources and taking turns on the soft play apparatus. The children's personal development is good. They are taking responsibilities, such as deciding which activities to do and when to do them and helping the adults to tidy up. The children are developing good manners and they are beginning to show suitable respect for others.

13. During the past few years the level of attendance at school has been poor. There have been

a significant number of children with less than 50 per cent attendance where the incidence of absence often rises on Mondays and Fridays. Whilst the children's good attitudes and behaviour and their personal development make a positive contribution to the quality of learning, the progress of some children is bound to be affected by poor levels of attendance. This is an important issue for the school to address.

## **HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?**

14. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, very often good and sometimes very good. It was very good in 13 per cent of the activities observed, good in 66 per cent and satisfactory in all the remainder. Teachers and nursery nurses work closely together to provide the good quality of teaching which has a clear impact on the levels of attainment and the progress being made. Teaching is strengthened by the effective arrangements for planning and assessing using the new Early Learning Goals. The teaching meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. Group times provide good opportunities for focused teaching but the arrangements can benefit from review to maximise their effectiveness and ensure that the size of the groups gives most benefit. There are firm plans to introduce structured monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

15. Staff plan the curriculum carefully in the light of the 'stepping stones' that children are likely to achieve as they progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Teachers and nursery nurses show a good knowledge and understanding of the new national requirements and plan the curriculum to support the goals. Staff work together co-operatively and make good use of individual skills.

16. The teachers and the nursery nurses share day-to-day responsibility for supervising particular activities and for teaching groups of children. Each of the three classes has a teacher and nursery nurse(s) assigned to it. Staff are supportive of one another and use their time flexibly, adapting their role to meet the needs of the children; for example, when a large number of children gravitated towards the area which provided a wide range of sand and water activities, three adults ended up supporting the children. In the wet sand activity, a member of staff encouraged the use of the bowls of wet sand to be bowls of 'porridge' which led to questioning related to 'The Three Bears'. At the same time a member of staff intervened in the dry sand activity to clearly and firmly reaffirm some of the 'ground rules'.

17. During the inspection there were a small number of occasions when teaching was less effective and this was generally in group time when a task was set for individual children to try in turns. The group was too large for this to be successful and a lack of involvement led to a number of children losing concentration and becoming restless. The activities planned need to take into account the size of the groups. Overall, the quality of group time varied and was adversely affected at the end of the day when any continuity was lost through parents coming to collect their children, sometimes over a 20 minute period. There is a need to review group time to maximise its benefit.

18. The vast majority of teaching is very effective; for example, in soft play activity in the local community centre adults interacted very well with the children, encouraging them to take risks and try within a secure environment; all intervention challenged the children to be more adventurous. In counting games involving a dice, the level of intervention and support ensures that children fully understand and are completely involved. The quality of teaching is underpinned by close, supportive relationships.

19. The children are well managed and supervision is good throughout the day, including at lunchtime. Discipline is achieved through calmness, patience, good humour, praise, encouragement and quiet reinforcement of rules. The quality of the teaching and provision

prepares the children well for their move into statutory schooling. There are firm plans to introduce rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and this can promote the further improvement of the quality of teaching.

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

20. The curriculum is broad and balanced; it takes account of the new guidance for the Foundation Stage. It prepares the children well for their next school and the National Curriculum. The school provides a good range of stimulating learning activities planned within the six areas of learning but which also allow children to develop skills and concepts across several areas. For example, children count spontaneously whilst bouncing on the soft play castle and extend their vocabulary when exploring the textures of material they use in creative activities. The current planning is very thorough and identifies the learning outcomes as identified in the Early Learning Goals. The planning includes how the school puts into practice effective learning and what the adults should do to provide effective teaching. Assessment is an integral part of the procedure. All adults play an active part in the process of planning, assessing and developing the curriculum.

21. As children are settling into school the provision for children with special educational needs is being developed, initially through the very good assessment procedures. Evidence from both documentation and previous years' registers suggests that the children are well supported and make good progress.

22. The curriculum is enriched by visits to farms and the seaside and by expeditions into the local environment. Children can observe horses in the fields beyond the playground and vehicles at the motor museum next door. Puppeteers and other performers visit the school.

23. The provision for children's spiritual development is good. All staff value children's ideas and encourage the children's friends to do so too, which is the first step in developing insight into the values and beliefs of others. They are encouraged to look at some of the wonderful phenomena in nature such as spiders' webs covered in dew. They are amazed when the photographs they take on their environmental walk are projected onto the computer screen and then printed.

24. The provision for children's moral development is good. The children have only been in the Nursery for a relatively short time but the majority are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and abide by the daily routines. Through play, through discussion and by example, the children are learning to care for and respect each other and their environment. Discipline is taught calmly and quietly and staff work well together to develop children's self-esteem.

25. The provision for children's social development is very good. All adults provide excellent role models and relationships are very good. Children are encouraged to work together co-operatively. They take responsibility for resources, getting them out and putting them away. They decide when to drink their milk and help to serve the fruit snacks or special birthday cakes. Circle time enables children to share experiences whilst giving them the choice as to whether they are ready and confident to speak at a particular time.

26. The provision for children's cultural development is sound. Children learn about the local myth of the Lambton Worm. They visit the community centre nearby to make use of the soft play resources. They visit the theatre in Newcastle. The environment is enhanced by examples of the work of various artists and children observe the work of artists such as Emile Nolde in detail and paint pictures of 'Red Poppies' in his style. They learn about traditions such as dyeing Easter eggs

with natural dyes. There are insufficient resources which introduce children to the cultural diversity which is part of society beyond their immediate environment.

27. The new headteacher is forming stronger links with the adjacent school and has constructive links with other institutions within the area through being part of working parties and initiatives. She is developing the curricular provision which has improved overall since the last inspection. Now, there is planning for progression through the use of the 'stepping stones' within the Early Learning Goals. Assessment procedures are good. The effective arrangements for planning and assessing are a strength of the school and contribute to the successful delivery of the curriculum.

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

28. The school has good procedures for monitoring the children's academic performance and supporting their personal development. The caring staff know the children well and provide good supervision in a sensitive manner. Before a child starts school, a member of staff visits the home and ensures that a detailed profile of the child is recorded. A friendly, welcoming atmosphere greets the children on their arrival. The children are made to feel special and are encouraged to develop independence. The school is developing its monitoring of children through its introduction of tracking of individual children and regular assessments made against the national Early Learning Goals.

29. Although the school has some written pastoral guidance, the policies are in need of review in order that the staff have clear guidelines. The behaviour policy, for example, is vague and there is no formal code of conduct. The staff encourage positive attitudes by frequent use of praise and prompt action to prevent adverse behaviour.

30. Welfare provision is good overall. There is good support by external agencies, such as the medical visitors. The school places a very high emphasis on personal, social and health education, which permeates throughout the curriculum. Hygiene and healthy eating are well promoted. One nursery nurse is trained in first aid but there is a need for more widespread training. The school has a suitable accident record book. There are appropriate child protection procedures and the designated teacher is appropriately trained.

31. The school has not carried out monitoring of absence and has, in the past, done little to promote good attendance; it is essential that the school makes parents aware of the importance of good attendance, especially when there is a waiting list for places at the school. Good attendance will enable all children to derive the maximum benefit from the good provision.

32. The school has a satisfactory health and safety policy. A number of building maintenance items have been recently completed to improve the school but there remain other improvements which need to be made, especially to the external environment, such as the badly deteriorating wall to the raised garden. Within the school, housekeeping matters should be kept under regular review to ensure safety at all times.

33. Whilst the school does not currently have any stated aims, a mission statement has been produced. Based on its caring ethos, the school is successful in providing effective care and guidance to all its pupils, including those who have special educational needs. This enhances their self-confidence and contributes to the standards of education that are achieved.

34. A feature of the school's record keeping has been in the form of booklets, profiling individual children. These are well managed and involve the collection of samples of work, photographic

evidence and some records of attainment. They give a useful picture of the child's development and help to inform the good quality end of year report given to parents. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, much headway has been made in assessing and recording individual children's attainment and progress. This starts with an initial assessment undertaken with the help of parents.

35. Assessments are part of the weekly plans when activities are designed which involve assessments made against competencies identified in the 'stepping stones' which lead to the specific learning goals. Even though this practice is still being developed, there are signs that the staff are managing it well and that, when established, it will provide a clear means of monitoring the progress of each individual as they move towards achievement of the new Early Learning Goals.

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

36. The school has a good partnership with its parents. Parents feel welcomed into the school and there is daily contact with the teachers and nursery nurses. Parents and other relatives are encouraged to help in school; volunteers assist in lessons, on visits and in projects to improve the school's external environment. Parents have undertaken fund-raising for the school and are very supportive in their response to requests for resources.

37. Parents and the local community hold the school in high esteem and many parents spoke of its excellent reputation. Some parents would like assurance that children in the immediate area have priority for places in the school. The school is reviewing this point. The parents praised the school's effective induction procedures and felt that the school provided a caring, secure environment.

38. The school provides a booklet and occasional newsletters for parents. At the end of the school year, parents receive a very good portfolio containing many examples to illustrate the work through the year and a detailed report on their children's progress. There is a formal parents' evening in the summer term but, as noted in the school's previous report, some parents would prefer to have an earlier indication of their children's progress and attainment. The school has firm plans to improve the provision of information; for example, by arranging open days. It has recently started displaying useful leaflets on a notice board in order that parents can understand how to take a more active role in helping their children to learn.

39. Whilst the impact of parents' involvement is generally good, it is important that all parents become more aware of the necessity for punctuality, so that sessions are not disrupted by late arrivals and by early departures.

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

40. The very good leadership by the headteacher is a strength of the school. All the staff share a very good commitment to improvement and have the capacity to succeed. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The skills of the teachers and the nursery nurses are used well.

41. There has been a steady improvement since the last inspection. A system of curriculum leadership was introduced to assist with the development of each of the areas of learning. Links with parents have been developed. There has been a good programme of in-service training involving all staff. There is a shared will to build on the school's strengths through a programme of review and development and this is identified in the school improvement planning. Monitoring and



evaluating of teaching and learning are not yet in place but the new headteacher has firm plans to implement rigorous procedures.

42. The very good quality of leadership is providing clear educational direction for the Nursery. It involves a number of changes and all staff are very supportive of the new procedures. Now, there is a need to develop guidance for staff which reflects the new practices.

43. The Nursery provides effective learning in a calm, caring and well organised environment and this reflects the aims and values of the school. The new headteacher, with the help of all staff, has reviewed the current school improvement plan and there is a good commitment to self-evaluation with recognition of the role it plays in making a good school better for the children in its care.

44. The governing body is supportive of the school and its work and they are kept well informed. As children only remain in the Nursery for one year, there is a constant change in membership and at the time of the inspection new parent governors had not been elected; there are a small number of governors who have had long associations with the school. There is a need to develop the involvement of the governing body to enable it to be more effective in its role.

45. The governing body is responsible for the schools' admission arrangements and the procedures for staggered entry at the beginning of the academic year. Currently these are historical and contain elements of good practice but they are not clearly defined and known to all. Some children start significantly later than others do and the reasons for this are not always clear.

46. The school does not manage the whole of its budget, as it is not part of the local management of schools scheme. Its decisions on spending relate clearly to priorities for improvement. Financial resources are carefully managed, giving appropriate consideration to the principles of best value.

47. The secretary gives good, efficient support dealing with routine administration and contributing to the smooth running of the school. She is committed to professional development and is making good use of new initiatives. The cleaner in charge creates a warm, clean, healthy environment for the children. The majority of children stay at school for their lunch and are provided with food of good quality and staff offer good care and support.

48. The accommodation indoors has been upgraded recently to include carpeting and this has enhanced the learning environment. The structure of the building has been repaired and the outside painted. The outdoor environment for learning is insufficiently developed and the new headteacher is keen to make improvements. It requires maintenance to the hard surface and grass areas and is insufficiently stimulating to support all areas of learning.

49. Recently, resources have been purchased to support outdoor play. The school has an adequate quantity of resources for all areas of learning and they are well maintained and cared for. Currently new, colourful, stimulating resources are being developed by members of staff and these make a good contribution to areas such as mathematics.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection will be addressed.

In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ improve the levels of attendance and punctuality by:
  - *emphasising the importance of this to parents in all documents and through personal contact;*
  - *devising clear means of communicating attendance information to parents in order to promote the importance of this issue;*
  - *devising a celebration of good attendance system for parents and children;*
  - *the consideration of liaising with neighbouring schools regarding finishing and starting times;*

(paragraphs 13, 19, 31, 39 and 62)

- ◆ introduce a framework for monitoring teaching and learning which:
  - *provides a structured approach;*
  - *gives targets for improvement;*
  - *enhances the professional development of the staff;*

(paragraphs 14, 19 and 41)

- ◆ develop the external environment focusing on:
  - *the provision for outdoor play;*
  - *the condition of the playground area and walls;*
  - *improving the grassed area;*
  - *the introduction of playground markings;*

(paragraphs 8, 48, 75 and 85)

- ◆ develop clear guidelines for staff which reflect new practices, including:
  - *the production of a staff handbook;*
  - *the systematic review of all policies so that they reflect the changes made.*

(paragraphs 29 and 42)

In addition to the above areas, the following less critical areas should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs 14, 17, 45, 66 and 68:

- ◆ review the arrangements for the staggered admission of children, producing clear guidelines;
- ◆ review the arrangements for group times to maximise their effectiveness.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

38

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

49

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	13	66	21	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 children

#### Children on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of children on the school's roll	78
Number of children eligible for free school meals	11

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of children with Statements of Special Educational Need	0
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	3

#### English as an additional language

	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	0

#### Children's mobility in the last school year

	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of children per qualified teacher	25.7

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

### Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	182,920
Total expenditure	170,973
Expenditure per pupil	2,250
Balance brought forward from previous year	0

Number of children per FTE adult	9.6
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Balance carried forward to next year	11,947
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out:

78
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Number of questionnaires returned:

14
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### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	57	29	0	0	14
Behaviour in the school is good	71	22	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	0	21	0	0	79
The teaching is good	79	14	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	86	14	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	79	21	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	36	43	0	0	21
The school works closely with parents	64	22	7	0	7
The school is well led and managed	64	29	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	57	36	0	0	7
The school provides as interesting range of activities outside lessons	43	28	0	0	29

This standard OFSTED questionnaire is used in all primary schools and, as such, contains some questions which are not fully appropriate for nursery schools. At the time of the inspection, most children had only been in school for a matter of weeks. The above two circumstances may well have led to the low return rate of questionnaires and the number of 'don't know' responses.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### ***Personal, social and emotional development***

50. At the time of the inspection, most children had attended the Nursery for a matter of weeks. They were still developing relationships with staff and other children and were still gaining an understanding of routines and the activities available. The promotion of personal, social and emotional development is, therefore, viewed as a priority.

51. Attainment on entry into the Nursery is broadly in line with what could be expected. The children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals which set out what most children should achieve by the end of the Reception year in a primary school, which marks the end of the Foundation Stage. This judgement on attainment upholds that made in the previous report.

52. Virtually all the children separate happily from their carers at the start of the day. It is clear that they feel safe and secure, showing a sense of trust. They begin to form new friendships and to help one another; for example, in an activity painting bags they have made, one child points out to another 'You need to put a pinny on' and when using play dough one child says 'Look, you need to use this rolling pin'. They begin to work as a social group; for example, when four children with four different instruments form a 'band'.

53. They quickly learn to take turns; for example, when printing the photographs on the computer taken by the digital camera. At snack time, they take turns to take fruit from the tray; an activity that reinforces 'please' and 'thank you'. In circle time, most feel confident enough to give information about themselves and conform to the rule of only speaking when holding the frog. This activity promotes self-confidence. When playing outside, they take turns with the wheeled toys and co-operate when sharing the available space. They attend to dressing and personal hygiene. They are beginning to show independence at lunchtime when most deal competently with a school lunch.

54. The children have a positive approach to all the new experiences on offer and most are happy to work both with or without adult supervision and are willing to join in with adult initiated activities. Their enthusiasm is clear to see. Children show curiosity when studying the fish and the snails and when examining shells using magnifying glasses. They show curiosity when learning about the properties of the many materials available, such as water, sand and play dough.

55. The quality of learning is good and children make good progress. They are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and about consideration for others. They are gaining in independence; for example, when choosing when to take a 'milk break'. They are learning to make choices from the wide range of purposeful activities available. They are increasingly taking responsibility for their own actions, such as when they tidy up after themselves.

56. The quality of teaching by both the teachers and the nursery nurses is good and has a positive impact on the progress being made. Staff have high expectations of behaviour to which the children usually respond. Staff are very good role models. They have a very good understanding of how young children learn and very good relationships are being developed. Warm, supportive relationships underpin the teaching and the learning. All staff are consistently encouraging consideration for others and praise children for effort and co-operation; this has a positive effect on children's self-esteem and promotes good behaviour. Each child is valued as an individual.

57. The curriculum is organised to foster social skills in all areas of learning; for example, co-

operation skills are encouraged through the good range of counting and matching games. Good planning, organisation and the wide range of activities on offer all combine to give children good opportunities for personal, social and emotional development. The school has plans to both nurture a closer relationship with home and to further develop record keeping in this area of learning,

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

58. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with what could be expected, except for a significant minority where it is below what could be expected in speaking and language skills. The majority of children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage of their education. A significant minority may not achieve the higher level competencies prescribed; for example, those concerned with understanding elements of stories and exploring and experimenting with sounds, words and texts. A small number of children are likely to exceed the learning goals. Standards are similar to those described in the previous report.

59. This area of the curriculum is appropriately given a high priority and good opportunities are provided to practise the elements of both speaking and listening and early reading and writing. The children listen to favourite nursery rhymes, stories, poems and songs, joining in with rhymes and key phrases. They respond to simple instructions; for example, on how to manipulate the trackerball to create a drawing on the monitor screen when using the computer. They develop an enjoyment of books such as 'Dear Zoo' and 'Kipper's Bear'. Sometimes they choose and look at books independently. They enjoy sharing stories with an adult in the comfortable story corner, learning that print carries meaning. They enjoy retelling stories, such as 'Billy Goat Gruff'.

60. Increasingly the children talk to both the staff and to other children, listening and expressing preferences and needs. In 'review time' although most respond well when the teacher says, 'Can you tell us something you have enjoyed doing today?' there are a number who have difficulty in responding to a more complex question such as 'Do you want to tell us how you made your bag?' Children are encouraged to write and recognise names. In the writing corner, they make birthday cards and booklets about their families. They draw and paint and are encouraged to give meaning to the marks they make; for example, some children write and draw and then 'read' what they have written about their families and pets. Overall, children are gaining confidence in making marks and developing early writing skills. They are able to adopt roles in the home corner. Their language skills improve on these occasions especially when an adult working with them is able to offer good ideas on how the role-play should develop. This helps to make the activities purposeful and increases children's confidence. The teaching is characterised by good questioning skills.

61. The children respond well to the broad range of activities offered to support development in communication, language and literature. Having been in Nursery for a matter of weeks, the children are making a positive start, showing both enthusiasm and effort, this is partly due to the high expectations made of them by both teachers and nursery nurses alike, who ensure that that no time is wasted. A strength of the teaching is the way in which all children, including those with special educational needs, learn well and make good progress.

62. The quality of teaching is usually good and sometimes very good. The teaching is supported by good quality planning and assessing, making use of the 'stepping stones' which lead to the goals. Teachers' planning and assessing has improved since the last inspection. In an activity based on the school environment, teachers used good questioning techniques and helped the children to understand why things are as they are through clear explanations. In a writing activity, the quality of the questioning had a direct impact on the quality of the response, promoting language development, including vocabulary extension. Children benefit from high quality storytelling and from the very supportive relationships. The quality of teaching and learning was

adversely affected in review and story time at the end of the day when the activity was constantly interrupted as parents collected children. The arrangements for the collection of children could benefit from review to make them less intrusive.

63. Resources for this area of learning are good, although the school recognises that there is a need for further development, including the book provision. The role-play area would benefit from review and development. Adult intervention could be more effective if this area was more open and less closed off by its wooden surround. Good arrangements have been introduced to assess children's progress against the 'stepping stones' of learning which have been identified. This is giving a clearer framework for progression. Children have benefited in recent times from visits by a puppeteer and a theatre group as well as from taking part in a Christmas production for parents. The staff show good commitment to further improving the quality of teaching and learning in this vital part of the early years curriculum.

### ***Mathematical development***

64. The majority of children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage of their education, which is at the end of the Reception year. A significant minority may not achieve the higher level competencies prescribed such as being able to use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. A small number of children will exceed the targets set. Children make good progress in the Nursery. The standards and provision have been maintained since the last inspection report.

65. The majority of children show an interest in numbers and counting and use number names and language spontaneously. For example, when jumping on the soft play bouncy castle children counted their jumps and, whilst they were unable to say all numbers consecutively, they were familiar with many numbers to 20. When playing number games, they are beginning to count spots on a dice to three and recognise numerals to the same denomination. They enjoy joining in with number songs such as; 'Five currant buns in a baker's shop' and can count backwards as each bun is bought. Some children can compare two groups of objects and make sets of the same number. They are learning to sort using one criteria. Higher ability children are able to sort using two criteria; for example selecting another yellow teddy and another red dinosaur. They show an interest in shape and space; for example, they rearrange the soft play cuboids and prisms to make a pattern to move over. They complete a self-correcting board which requires them to put a three-dimensional shape in its correct hole. They are able to use mathematical language such as 'big' and 'little' when playing with three bears.

66. Learning is effective because children enjoy the purposeful activities that are organised within the Nursery. They enjoy playing games and moving toys the correct number of spaces along the board. Where they are not fully involved, because the group is too big for all to participate, children make less progress. Children are able to initiate activities within the carefully planned environment; for example, they choose to explore how high they can make a tower of bricks. They practise using their mathematical skills and knowledge learning about full and empty when using containers in the water play.

67. Children want to join in any mathematical activities and when too many children wish to join in the counting game, the teacher organises a rota. They concentrate well when undertaking all practical activities where they are fully involved; for example, filling containers with wet sand. They learn to take turns at throwing the dice. They all try hard to undertake the actions when singing the song 'Five little men in a flying saucer'. The well organised environment enables the children to independently select activities, which they do confidently and enthusiastically.



68. The quality of teaching is good overall. There is a well planned programme which takes account of the new national guidance. The environment is stimulating and encourages children to explore mathematical concepts. Where there is direct intervention or teaching, assessment records are kept. Where teaching is very good, questioning and explanations are particularly clear and do not make any assumptions; for example, naming and talking about the dice prior to the instruction to roll it. Interaction is supportive but gives the child time and confidence to try to carry out the task correctly and independently. Praise is used well throughout. Teaching is less effective where there is ambiguity in the questions asked; for example, when sorting by more than one criteria and using 'how many' unclearly. All staff make an effective contribution to learning when interacting with small groups; management of large groups is less focused and not all children participate fully. Group times can benefit from review.

69. The curriculum is imaginative. Staff have worked very hard to put the new national guidance in place. They work well as a team; they all contribute to organising the stimulating environment and participate in the making of colourful, interesting resources such as the large dice and the lily pond leaves for the frog to jump. Assessment is an integral part of the management of the day and makes a valuable contribution. There has been a good range of professional development for all staff and there are plans for further development which involve further observation of Reception year numeracy so that staff fully understand the next stage in the children's development. Resources are improving and there are plans to further extend these. The provision prepares children well for the next stage in their education.

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

70. The majority of children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals and a small number will exceed them. This judgement is similar to that made in the previous report, except that high attainment was noted in knowledge of features of the local environment. As the school still places a strong emphasis on trips in the locality, together with effective relationships with both the parents and the local community, the current inspection upholds that previous judgement.

71. Observations made during the inspection, together with evidence of previous work including photographs, indicate that the children are given a wide range of valuable experiences. Even though the children have been in Nursery for a relatively short time they have made a positive start. They learn how to operate the computer and are interested in information and communication technology, an aspect which is currently being developed. During the inspection they printed photographs taken on the digital camera. They learn appropriate vocabulary such as 'monitor', 'program' and 'trackerball'; they can create their own drawings 'dragging' colours across the screen.

72. Children show a natural curiosity about the world and how things work through activities with magnets and magnifying glasses. They observe and manipulate materials; for example, they enjoy working with play dough and with water and different types of sand. They investigate construction materials and realise that tools are for a purpose; for example, in a bag making activity they are encouraged to consider the use of a hole punch and scissors as well as the use of string and tape as materials for joining things together.

73. Provision for learning about the world is good. Good use is made of the local area with visits to the library, a farm and to nearby Walbottle. Knowledge is enhanced through regular visits to places further afield such as Tynemouth Sea Life Centre, Whitley Bay and Beamish Museum. During the time of the inspection, children enjoyed local walks and plotting the important features they had seen.

74. Children learn about the passing of time by considering their own history through studying

photographs of themselves as babies and talking about themselves, their families and their homes. They learn of the differences between the past and the present through visits to the quarry, the riverside, the neighbouring car museum, the churchyard and Throckley Ponds.

75. Some good use is made of the external environment of the school, although there are plans for significant development in this area. Children grow seeds and plants and benefit from the kitchen garden where they learn about composting. They observe tadpoles growing into frogs and study minibeasts, including a colony of snails.

76. Children have positive attitudes to the good range of activities on offer, showing both curiosity and real enthusiasm. They enjoy comparing the different types of snails through magnifying glasses. They usually make good progress through the well planned work. When exploring materials and enjoying walks in the local environment, they co-operate well with the staff and usually behave well.

77. The quality of teaching is usually good and has a clear impact on the quality of the children's response, on their behaviour and on the progress being made. The activities are well planned and assessed in light of specific 'stepping stones'. In design activities, teachers effectively model the use of tools and, where appropriate, provide a commentary on what is going on. The teaching is usually characterised by clear instruction, good pace and high expectations, together with good relationships.

78. The work is well organised and well resourced. Well planned, ongoing assessment gives staff a clear perception of the progress being made by individual children. Information and communication technology is becoming a feature of the Nursery with a helpful new policy and 'software map' to support work in each of the six areas. The expertise of one of the nursery nurses is being used well to provide leadership in the staff development taking place. The school makes good use of its rich local environment.

### ***Physical development***

79. Attainment in the area of physical development is good and many children are likely to achieve standards which are above those expected nationally by the end of the Foundation Stage. The standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

80. The children move around the school with pleasure and confidence. They demonstrate good co-ordination as they pedal and steer a variety of wheeled toys outdoors. They adjust speed or change direction as they encounter obstacles. They can kick, catch and bounce large balls. They climb over and slither through large blocks. When using the soft play apparatus located in the community centre, they demonstrate the skills of rolling, jumping, sliding and crawling. They are able to negotiate space successfully when moving over the apparatus. They mount the steps and the more able children go sideways and backwards as well as forwards and experiment with different ways of moving. Children persevere and repeat actions when developing a new skill; for example, jumping from one soft play block to another one spanning a distance.

81. Children show respect for other children's personal space; for example, whilst sitting on the carpet around their teacher and waiting for others to complete their turn when moving on the apparatus. They are beginning to recognise the importance of hygiene, washing their hands prior to lunch and after activities such as painting and sticking. They demonstrate increasing skill and control in the use of mark-making implements, construction sets and small world activities. For example, they propel the train forwards and backwards round the track, build vehicles with construction kits and move animals such as bears, apes and lions appropriately while engaging in

imaginative small world play. They manipulate materials such as play dough, squeezing, rolling and pinching it when making cakes. They use scissors to cut zigzag lines and fasten materials together using staplers when making bags. They are learning to fasten their own coats and shoes and put on aprons before undertaking messy or wet activities.

82. The children make good progress due to the effective learning environment that is safe, well planned and adequately resourced. They have plenty of opportunities to explore and refine movements unhurriedly. They have opportunities to develop their physical skills both indoors and out.

83. Children show great enjoyment of physical activities, particularly in the soft play area where they are excited by the challenges set. They have positive attitudes and are keen to participate in most activities. They are enthusiastic about playing outdoors and co-operate well when climbing over the large blocks and sharing the wheeled toys. They concentrate well when painting the wall with water and playing with the balls, trying hard to reproduce the actions demonstrated by the adults.

84. The quality of teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good. Where teaching is very good, all adult interaction is supportive yet challenging, enabling children to feel secure and take risks. For example, when children are moving over the soft play equipment, staff enable them to roll within the big wheel; all of the children feel confident when jumping into the ball pond and playing on the bouncy castle. There are regular and frequent physical activities planned for indoors and outdoors. All staff introduce the language of negotiation and co-operation such as 'share' and 'take turns'. They model physical activities well, such as kicking the ball and painting shapes on the wall. They support children building with construction kits, and allow them to practise using a stapler before trying to join the materials that are part of the child's model. Tools and equipment are easily accessible and children can make selections for themselves; for example, whilst mark making. Staff give children opportunities and encouragement to build up skills of personal autonomy, such as taking their shoes and socks off and putting them on again.

85. The school has sufficient space both indoors and outside to provide good quality physical activities. The internal space has been improved recently. The outdoor area is less satisfactory; the condition of the playground and walls do not enhance the provision, the grassed area is in need of attention and the area is insufficiently stimulating. The school is fortunate in being able to access the soft play equipment in the community centre. Resources are adequate in quality and quantity. Already, additional equipment has been ordered for the outdoor area. Planning which takes full account of the new national guidance for the Foundation Stage is very good and all staff have worked hard to put it in place. The provision prepares children well for the next stage of their education.

### ***Creative development***

86. Attainment on entry into the Nursery is broadly in line with what could be expected and children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their creative development by the end of the Foundation Stage. The standards and provision have been maintained since the last inspection report.

87. Children are beginning to differentiate colours and the majority recognise red, yellow, blue and green. They can describe textures correctly using simple words such as shiny and soft. They use paint and the computer mouse to make lines that enclose a space and many are able to use these to represent objects; for example, children drew the inspectors, using a computer program and the mouse. Children are able to use construction kits creatively, stacking blocks vertically and horizontally and making objects and spaces. They are able to join in the actions while singing

songs; for example 'Five Little Leaves'. They show an interest in the sound of musical instruments, banging and striking them.

88. Children use the available resources to create props to support role-play; for example, dressing up as a fairy and making food for the dolls before putting them to bed. They are beginning to engage in imaginative small world play making the noises of the polar bear, lion and ape whilst engaged in a pretend story. Children show pleasure with large grins when they are praised and some express frustration and worry through tears, although these are soon dispersed through the good intervention of adults.

89. Learning is effective and children make good progress. They have time to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities. They feel secure so that they try new things; they are not afraid to take risks, make mistakes and be adventurous in their creative activities.

90. Children enjoy being creative. They show expressions of delight whilst striking, banging and scraping percussion instruments. They concentrate well when making bags and baskets from boxes. They persevere when stacking blocks and are very keen to use the computer program to draw pictures. They paint happily. Behaviour is good.

91. The quality of teaching is good. Adults value children's individual ideas and allow them to develop them in their own way; for example, each bag or basket was made and decorated individually. They are supportive and act as enablers. The organisation of the environment allows children to make choices, not only as to which creative activities they wish to choose but also in the materials and tools they select. All adults talk to children and act as good role models; for example, whilst painting on the walls outdoors and engaging in imaginative play within the home base area.

92. Creative development is enhanced by outside visits and visitors; for example, children attended the theatre to see the play 'Jemima Puddleduck'. An aesthetically pleasing environment surrounds the children and their creative efforts are valued in the good quality displays. Children are given opportunities to study local folklore, dramatising, making costumes and learning songs in dialect about the Lambton Worm. Puppeteers visit the school. Resources are good and all staff are involved in training. The school prepares children well for the next stage in their education.