

INSPECTION REPORT

SPEEDWELL NURSERY SCHOOL

Bristol

LEA area: Bristol

Unique reference number: 108900

Headteacher: Mrs A I Patterson

Reporting inspector: Mrs J M Jones
23097

Dates of inspection: 6 - 7 November 2000

Inspection number: 225041

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 to 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Speedwell Road Bristol
Postcode:	BS5 7SY
Telephone number:	0117 9030329
Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Ms K Hutt
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
 WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16
 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
 PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Speedwell Nursery School has 100 boys and girls aged three to four years. At the time of the inspection nearly all the children were three years old and had only been in school for a few weeks. 60 children attend for the morning session and 40 for the afternoon. The number of children on roll has fallen since the last inspection, partly because some parents require full-time education for their children and the school is unable to provide this at present. In national socio-economic terms the intake is slightly below average. Children come from both owner-occupied houses and rented accommodation. About half the families live in local authority housing. Just under a tenth of the children come from ethnic minority communities. A similar proportion has English as an additional language and their first languages are Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Patois and Italian. Ten children are on the register of special educational needs because of social, speech and communication difficulties. Some children have also been identified as causing some concern but have not yet been placed on the register as it is so early in the school year. No child has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The overall attainment of children on entry varies and is broadly appropriate for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Speedwell Nursery is an effective school in which teaching is good with the result that children achieve well. By the time children leave the nursery, they attain standards appropriate for their age in communication, language and literacy and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They exceed them in mathematics and their personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good and the school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school does well

- Children achieve well and make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning because teaching is effective and teachers have a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn.
- The very good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development raises children's self-esteem and helps them develop confidence, independence and very good attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum provides the children with a very wide range of rich and stimulating experiences across all areas of learning through well planned and purposeful play activities.
- The headteacher and staff have a strong commitment to children's welfare, work very well as a team and have developed very effective links with parents.

What could be improved

- The provision for information and communication technology in order to raise children's attainment.
- The school's assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to enable teachers to plan work that more closely meets the needs of all children, especially the more able, and show clearly the progress that children make through the school.
- The monitoring and evaluation procedures of the headteacher, key staff and governors are not regular, rigorous and systematic enough to give a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and inform strategic school development planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected in May 1997, Speedwell Nursery was found to be a good school that served its children and community well. The school has maintained the many strengths identified in the report. Children continue to make good progress and their attitudes to their learning are still very good. Standards remain similar. The quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the headteacher remain good. The school has made satisfactory overall improvement in addressing the key issues identified in the report. The provision for information and communication technology and teaching and learning for the more able children are much better but, as the school is aware, they could be improved further. Schemes of work for physical development, history and geography have been completed and the security issues addressed.

STANDARDS

From the work seen during the inspection, most children attain the overall standard expected for children of a similar age. Standards are as expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are exceeded in personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development. Children, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, achieve well and make good overall progress. The strong emphasis on counting and number skills results in particularly good progress in mathematics. By the time they leave the nursery, most children's attainment is above expectations both overall and in all areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy and their knowledge and understanding of the world, where it is as expected.

At the time of the inspection, the children had only been in school for a very short time and the school was very successfully focusing on their personal, social and emotional development and speaking and listening skills. However, although teachers provide good opportunities for children to acquire reading skills in the story sessions, the limited quantity of books available at other times in the day and the way in which they are displayed, do not encourage children to browse. Teachers often miss opportunities for children to write and record their observations as part of their play activities. In mathematics, many children use number names confidently and have good counting skills for their age. A few more able children already recognise numbers to ten and count reliably to five. The school makes very effective use of the outdoor environment with the result that children become very aware of the natural world and, through a wide range of challenging and energetic physical activities, improve their co-ordination and the control of their bodies. Children's skills in information and communication technology are improving because of the school's enhanced provision and adults' increased confidence in using new technology. Children express themselves creatively by using a wide range of materials to make pictures and models. They play imaginatively in the home corner, join in favourite songs and show an interest in musical instruments.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and concentrate very well. They are very interested in activities and ask for help where needed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children know how they should behave. They are friendly, polite and handle resources with care.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children relate very well to each other and treat adults with respect. They are very confident and independent for their age and are beginning to use their initiative.
Attendance	Children are not of statutory school age and reporting requirements do not apply. Their punctuality is satisfactory.

Children are very familiar with daily routines, feel secure at school and are making a very positive start to their school life. They understand what is on offer in each room in the nursery and can therefore make informed choices when they select their own activities. They usually persevere with tasks until they are successfully completed and then repeat them again because they are so proud of their achievement. Most children are willing to help put things away at the end of a session. They listen carefully to adults' instructions and some are willing to contribute their own ideas. The school has good procedures to monitor and promote good attendance. These factors have a positive effect on their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory, 59 per cent was good or better and 18 per cent was very good. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is consistently very good because all adults encourage children to be independent and think for themselves. Teaching of communication, language and literacy is sound. It is better in group sessions when teachers have a clear focus on language and literacy skills. In mathematics, teaching is good. Teachers take every opportunity to encourage children to count and use mathematical language.

Staff have a very good understanding of how very young children learn through play and this principle underpins all their work. Children learn effectively because teachers plan a very wide range of practical and first-hand experiences in all areas of learning that stimulate their interest, enrich their experiences and promote talk. There is a good balance between adult-planned and child-initiated activities and children are given sufficient time to explore fully their interests and ideas. Teachers and nursery nurses work very well together and have high expectations of what children can achieve and of their behaviour and concentration. Children are consistently very well managed and therefore show self-control and consideration for others.

Areas for improvement in teaching are in the quality of display to create a more attractive learning environment and the provision for more able children. Although children with special educational needs or English as an additional language are well supported, teachers' written planning does not show how the learning of more able children can be extended. There are also no planned opportunities for higher attaining children to work together on more challenging tasks. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, open-ended questions are not used sufficiently to make children think more deeply and some activities are too prolonged so that the pace of learning slows. Very occasionally adults remain seated too long with an individual child or a very small group of children and do not interact enough with other children in the room.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and shows coverage of all aspects of the areas of learning and clear progression.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Children's special educational needs are identified quickly and monitored closely. Individual education plans include specific and achievable targets that are reviewed regularly and shared with parents.
Provision for pupils with	Satisfactory. Children receive appropriate support although there is no

English as an additional language	external help in assessing their language needs. The positive and caring atmosphere of the nursery gives children confidence in practising their language skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, especially for moral and social development, and reflected in all aspects of school life. The school's practical involvement in environmental and conservation issues is a particular strength. Children learn to distinguish between right and wrong and be sensitive to the needs of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school ensures children's welfare but procedures for assessing children's attainment and monitoring their progress are inconsistent.

Although written planning for the new foundation curriculum is not yet complete, the school's practice fully reflects its requirements. There is a strong emphasis on outdoor education and very good use is made of visitors to the school, such as artists, to enrich children's experiences. Children have many opportunities to work together in different groupings to develop their social skills. Staff and parents work very well in partnership and this has a positive impact on children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher leads well and manages staff and children effectively so that all work to a common purpose. Co-ordinators are beginning to make a more significant contribution to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body does not have statutory responsibility for the school but is very supportive and is becoming increasingly involved in school life.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Many improvements have been made but procedures for self-evaluation do not enable the school to review thoroughly its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has only recently been delegated responsibility for its non-staffing budget. It makes efficient use of all available space and resources.

The school's aims and values are fundamental to every aspect of the work of the school. The governors have formed a working party to provide financial advice and support to the headteacher who has yet to receive appropriate training. The school development plan is barely adequate. It does not extend beyond the current year and is not sufficiently detailed to provide a clear calendar of planned action.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school. They behave well and are helped to become responsible.• Teaching is good. Children are expected to work hard and do their best. They make good progress.• The school works closely with parents who are kept well informed about their children's progress.• The school is well led and managed and staff are approachable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents expressed their concern that children have neither a drink nor a snack provided while they are at school.

Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciative of the work of the headteacher and staff. Some parents felt unable to comment on certain aspects of school life because their children had only attended the school for such a short time. Inspection findings substantiate parents' positive views and agree that drinks and snacks could be made available for children in the middle of sessions.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Children achieve well and make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning because teaching is effective and teachers have a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn.

1. By the time children leave Speedwell Nursery School, which in most cases is after one year, they are well on the way to achieving the national early learning goals set for children by the end of the reception year. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly appropriate for their age. When they leave the nursery, most children's attainment is above expectations in all areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy and their knowledge and understanding of the world, where it is as expected. This represents, therefore, good achievement and progress, including for children with special educational needs or English as an additional language, which result from effective teaching. Teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding of child development and the way in which young children learn through play to support learning in all aspects of the curriculum. The strong emphasis on counting and number skills results in particularly good progress in mathematics.
2. From the work seen during the inspection, most children attain the overall standard expected for children of a similar age. Standards are as expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world and are exceeded in their personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development.
3. The quality of teaching in communication, language and literacy is sound. When children start school there is an appropriate focus on developing their speaking and listening skills. When studying vegetables, for example, the teacher planned that children would talk about their smell, appearance and taste and their personal likes and dislikes. As they were examining carrots, the children used good descriptive words. They said that the peel was "bumpy" and "soft" and the carrot sticks "looked like people". In all situations, adults listen carefully to children and encourage spontaneous conversation but also strive to help them develop a wider vocabulary. The home play area is well resourced and stimulates children's talk. In one session some boys were playing together in the home play area and they were chatting happily together about what they were doing. The teacher became part of the group and then quietly encouraged them to use the correct words to describe the various activities of washing up, doing the laundry and cleaning the floor and to name the equipment they were using.
4. Adults also take advantage of unexpected situations that present themselves during the day and intervene appropriately. In the art room, for instance, a quiet child was playing alone with the water. The teacher joined him and began to talk to him about what he was doing. Although he did not reply in words, the teacher responded to his expressions and gestures, showing that she valued this form of communication. She also provided him with a good language model in her use of correct vocabulary and grammar. On another occasion, a nursery nurse and a few children were looking at some root vegetables that were covered in mud. As a result of the conversations that ensued, one child stated that he was going to scrape some vegetables with a spade. Although, in fact, it was a trowel that he was going to use, he had learned the new word "scrape" during the conversation.
5. Children who do not communicate confidently with adults and those with underdeveloped attention and listening skills are given effective extra help by the special educational needs co-ordinator and a nursery nurse. A group of children with particular difficulties in concentrating benefited from a short but well planned lesson that included activities to help them follow simple instructions. All adults make time to talk with and listen to children who are reluctant to speak or for whom English is an additional language and are very sensitive to their needs.
6. Teaching is particularly good in group time because teachers have a clear focus on language and literacy skills. Teachers have very good storytelling techniques and children thoroughly enjoy the stories that are shared with them both individually and as a group. In one story time, the children

sat spellbound for a considerable time during a session based on the book "Whatever next", which had been read to them the day before. The teacher had planned the session very carefully to build on what had already been learned and, at the beginning of the session, checked what children could remember from the previous day. Her firm but quiet and fair discipline made the school's expectations of behaviour extremely clear to the children and the very good use of the props of real clothes for the teddy, that matched those worn by him in the book, ensured that children's interest was sustained.

7. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to acquire early reading skills in group sessions, for example in recognising their names. The limited quantity of books available at other times in the day and the way in which they are displayed, however, do not encourage children to browse and enjoy books on their own. In play activities some children explore the process of making marks on paper but adults often do not exploit the opportunities for children to experiment with writing and record their observations on paper. Teachers' planning and a scrutiny of children's work and records from last year, however, show that children make satisfactory progress in the development of reading and writing skills because they are given greater prominence later in the term.
8. In mathematics, teaching is good. Children are enthusiastic about mathematics and make particularly good progress because teachers take every opportunity to encourage children to count, regularly use mathematical language and develop children's understanding through songs, rhymes and imaginative play. Children's counting skills are good for their age and many use number names confidently. When reciting number rhymes, such as "One Little Finger" and "Five Brown Teddies", all children begin to learn to add and subtract to five. Some children use their fingers as a reminder when counting, and are able to work out very quickly which number comes next. A few more able children already recognise numbers to ten and count reliably to five or beyond. Many children know the primary colours and some readily identify others like pink and purple. One group managed, with adult help, to sort real vegetables into colour groups and match them to coloured paper. This was a challenging task because of the many different shades of one colour and the number of colours in a single vegetable. Some children are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language, such as "big", "small" or "the same size", as was evident when the size of different vegetables were being compared. They are also learning to distinguish between various shapes, such as circles and triangles, and name them correctly. All children have experience of counting beyond ten and are becoming aware of larger numbers when, at the beginning of each group time, the teacher counts the number of children present against the register total to check that the children have arrived in the right room.
9. The school makes very effective use of the outdoor environment with the result that children develop a good understanding of the natural world. At the time of the inspection, children were particularly interested in autumn and the way in which leaves come off the trees because this had been a particular focus for learning in previous weeks. One child was very keen to explain that the tree was not dead and there would be new leaves soon. The very wide range of real vegetables, including some straight from a farm, fascinated the children. Teachers maintained children's curiosity by looking closely at the whole vegetables on one day and then cutting them open the next day and allowing children to taste them. On one occasion, however, the activity was rather too prolonged with the result that children began to lose concentration and the pace of learning slowed. The teacher also asked questions that only required a one-word answer and did not make children think deeply enough about what they were observing. Very occasionally adults remain seated too long with an individual child or a very small group of children and do not interact enough with other children in the room.
10. Children develop good co-ordination and learn to control their bodies through a wide variety of challenging and energetic outdoor physical activities. They are physically active and move freely and with confidence. They become increasingly aware of their own and others' space, including when negotiating the "road" on a tricycle, with the result that accidents are rare. They also develop good hand control by completing jigsaw puzzles, building with bricks and various creative activities that involve using a range of equipment, such as paintbrushes, rolling pins and felt pens.

11. Children express themselves creatively in many areas of learning. Teachers encourage them to develop their ideas through painting, modelling with clay and dough, drawing, printing and model making with recyclable materials. They enjoy singing favourite songs, such as "Incy Wincy Spider", and experiment with sounds. They realise, for instance, that they can use untuned percussion instruments to make loud and soft sounds. Some children also know that the instruments can be shaken, tapped or scraped and know which is which. They play imaginatively in the home corner and are able to pretend to be characters, such as the old man or the cat, in the story of "The Enormous Turnip", and behave and move appropriately. When playing outside, the children were given some lengths of hose, which captured their imagination, and they promptly became firemen putting out the fires after bonfire night. In another session, a section of the outdoor area was cordoned off with a notice stating that builders were at work. The teacher participated in this activity alongside a group of children, thus extending their capacity to invent and pretend.

The very good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development raises children's self-esteem and helps them develop confidence, independence and very good attitudes to learning.

12. The school gives a very high priority to the children's personal, social and emotional development and the quality of teaching and learning in this aspect of the curriculum is consistently very good. At the time of the inspection, the children had only been in school for a very short time. The main objectives for all staff were therefore to help children to separate happily from their parents or carers and feel secure at school. At the beginning of each session, nearly all children, including the youngest children, settle quickly to an activity and quite cheerfully say goodbye to the adults who brought them to school. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. Children know to which teaching group they belong and are very familiar with the daily routines. All children, for example, know that they have to cover their clothes with an overall when they paint in the art room and put a coat on before going outside. They understand what is on offer in each room in the nursery and outdoors and can therefore make informed choices when they select their own activities.
13. Staff help children to feel successful and raise their self-esteem through the positive encouragement and praise that they give them. The children, including those with special educational needs, thrive on this approach and are, therefore, very independent for their age and confident in their surroundings. Children decide for themselves what they want to do, and move freely from one part of the nursery to another, including between indoors and outdoors. They are polite and friendly to visitors and speak spontaneously to familiar adults. They also ask for help when they need it. One child, for example, asked an adult who was passing to help him find the peg for his coat. Adults encourage children to think for themselves and some children, therefore, begin to demonstrate high levels of initiative. This was exemplified in a music session when, after the activity had begun, one child noticed that a couple of children were standing at the door and wanting to join in. Without any fuss, he went over and opened the door for them. The nursery nurse, who clearly expected this mature behaviour, thanked him and continued. When parents or carers collect their children at the end of each session, teachers make a point of telling them what their children have achieved that day. This makes the children concerned feel special and increases their feelings of self-worth. Although all adults value children's work, a surprising weaker feature of the school's provision is the quality of display. Displays are not stimulating and do not reflect the full range and quality of the school's work to enhance the learning environment.
14. The children relate very well to each other and the adults who work with them, especially those in their teaching group. Teachers show genuine interest in what children have to say and ensure they have a sense of belonging by, for example, allocating individual coat pegs and regularly using their name cards. All children play happily alongside each other and some develop firm friendships of which teachers are well aware. In one group activity, when a child expressed the feeling that she missed her friend who was absent, the teacher praised her for coping so well on her own. Children also learn to take responsibility by playing a part in the daily routines. Nearly all children willingly help to clear up at the end of the free choice activity time and do so quickly and efficiently. Children are particularly proud when they are chosen to announce to the parents that everyone is ready to be collected.

15. Teachers and nursery nurses have high expectations of children's concentration. The children are strongly motivated to do their best because of the praise that adults give them. They are keen to learn, concentrate very well for their age and are prepared to try new things. When slicing up raw vegetables, for example, the children involved were so intrigued that they concentrated for a very long time and were confident enough to taste unfamiliar vegetables. Most children persevere with their chosen tasks until they are successfully completed. They often then do them again because they are so proud of their achievements.
16. The school's consistent approach to discipline ensures that children know how they should behave. Nearly all children listen very carefully to adults' instructions, as was shown in a musical activity when children followed the teacher's hand signals for playing or listening. Most children show self-control and consideration for others. When playing outside, for instance, children learn the need to take turns when using the slide and to use the track for wheeled vehicles so that they do not interfere with other activities. They handle resources with care, often putting them away without being reminded. Even when children's behaviour does not meet the school's high standards, teachers handle the situation in a quiet and positive manner.
17. The provision for moral and social development is very good and is reflected in all aspects of school life. Children have many opportunities to work alone as well as in small and large groups to develop their social skills and therefore get to know each other very well. The school's practical involvement in environmental issues and the use of its grounds is a particular strength. Children become very aware of the importance of being careful with resources, for example by using only one paper towel to dry their hands and of the possibility of making compost from vegetable peelings. They learn to "let things live and grow in the school grounds" because of the adults' firm commitment to conservation. Children learn to distinguish between right and wrong because adults explain to them the effect of their actions on other children. They also become sensitive to the needs of others. An example of this was when one child, whose mother was helping with the computers, said "I don't mind if I don't have a go on it (the computer) because I have one at home".

The curriculum provides the children with a very wide range of rich and stimulating experiences across all areas of learning through well planned and purposeful play activities.

18. The principle that children learn through planned and purposeful play activities underpins all curricular planning and teaching. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and shows full coverage of every aspect of all areas of learning and clear progression in the development of skills. Although the written planning for the new foundation curriculum has not yet been completed and some policies and schemes of work are out of date, the school's existing planning and practice fully meet its requirements. Teachers take responsibility for the detailed planning of activities in a different room each week and incorporate all areas of learning, giving appropriate priority to the important aspects of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics. This organisation means that children have a wider range of activities to choose from than would be possible in a classroom in which all areas of learning had to be represented. There is a good balance between activities that are planned by adults and those that children choose or initiate for themselves. The sessions are organised so that children have the time and space to become engrossed in their own interests and complete their selected task.
19. Children learn effectively because teachers plan a very wide range of practical and first-hand experiences that stimulate children's interest and enrich their experiences. They also sometimes plan similar activities to those that children have experienced before but add an interesting variation, such as making the play dough black, sparkly and scented with lavender and adding glitter to the water in the water tray. During the inspection, children participated in many interesting activities that promoted effective learning across all areas of learning. The "building site", for instance, supported: personal, social and emotional development because it encouraged children to take turns and share; imaginative play as children pretended to be builders; communication, language and literacy because children were encouraged to talk to adults and each other about their "work"; the language of mathematics; measurement through using tape measures and various rulers; and physical development as children handled and used a variety of builders' tools. The exploration of vegetables extended the theme of harvest from the previous week and necessitated children using

all their senses. The children looked closely at them using magnifying glasses, listened to the sound when they were cut open and were encouraged to smell, handle and taste them. This activity also involved many other opportunities for learning that included: comparing shapes, weight and sizes; using stories and non-fiction books; identifying and naming the vegetables; sorting them into various groups; counting; and, with help, recording on paper what they had found out using numbers, words and pictures. Children were also asked to make predictions such as what the raw vegetables might look like inside before they were cut open and what would happen when the water was poured into the colander to wash them. The teacher's planning showed that the activity would be further extended during the week by cooking and then liquidising the vegetables. These high quality activities are typical of those normally experienced by the children.

20. The school places a particularly strong emphasis on outdoor education and makes very efficient use of the wildlife area and the school grounds. Children benefit from a wide range of stimulating experiences that develop their appreciation of the world in which they live and their respect for living things. These include pond dipping, feeding birds in winter, growing bulbs, keeping the garden tidy, looking after a rabbit and planning a path that consists of many different surfaces, textures and shapes. Their physical development is also very well promoted through the excellent range of facilities and equipment. Children have opportunities to climb, pedal, scoot, crawl, hide, balance, slide, play ball games, "ride" wooden horses, chalk and play with the sand. Very good use is also made of visitors to the school, such as artists, to enrich children's experiences.

The headteacher and staff have a strong commitment to children's welfare, work very well as a team and have developed very effective links with parents.

21. The headteacher and staff successfully create a positive, supportive and caring atmosphere in which children's well-being is paramount. The school's main aim of "providing a secure and stimulating environment for children where their ideas, experiences and individuality are valued" is very well implemented and fundamental to the work of the school.
22. The headteacher leads the school well and manages staff and children effectively so that children make good progress and staff work as a team to achieve a common purpose. This is exemplified in the way in which all staff work together to evaluate curricular planning and revise the schemes of work. The co-ordinators for the areas of learning are beginning to make a more significant contribution to school improvement. The new scheme of work for mathematics, for example, was developed by all adults working together and then finalised by the mathematics co-ordinator. The co-ordinator for children with special educational needs manages the school's provision well and ensures that staff and parents are kept fully informed about their needs. Relationships between teaching and support staff are very strong as is evident in the supportive way in which they work together. Teachers appreciate the expertise and experience of the nursery nurses and therefore give them considerable responsibility for children's learning. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the school therefore has the capacity to improve further.
23. The school has established a very effective partnership with parents, which has a positive impact on children's learning. This is a significant achievement as every year there is a high turnover of parents and their involvement is usually only for one year. There are very well defined, tested and flexible procedures to help children settle quickly and make a very positive start to their school life. The two-way communication between home and school begins when children are first registered at the school and information is requested about the children's family situation and their physical and language needs. After children have attended the nursery for a couple of weeks, parents' views about the nursery are sought through a questionnaire and teachers and nursery nurses meet with parents to discuss how children have settled and share any concerns. A successful new development at this meeting is that teachers and parents agree one target that they would want the children to achieve by the end of term. Parents have two more opportunities during the year to have more formal meetings with teachers to discuss their children's progress and, as a result, report that they feel that they know how their children are getting on. Parents of children with special educational needs are also given frequent feedback about their children's progress.

24. The school's own questionnaire and that distributed to parents before the inspection show how pleased parents are with every aspect of the school and their children's achievement and progress. Parents are welcomed into the school at all times but teachers ensure that they make personal contact with them at the beginnings and ends of sessions. Parents are very involved in the development of the environmental area and, during the inspection, some parents were working in school to help children access the computer. Later in the year the school implements a book loan system to encourage parents to share and read books at home with their children. Parents are also provided with good information about the school through the handbook for parents and regular newsletters.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision for information and communication technology in order to raise children's attainment.

25. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issue of developing information and communication technology skills and understanding by providing appropriate equipment that was identified in the last inspection. Children's skills are improving because resources have been enhanced. The school now has a programmable toy, a tape recorder with headphones and two computers that have only recently been acquired. During free choice times, the listening centre is freely available and children can, with adult help, insert and listen to a story tape. They are also able to use the floor robot whenever they wish but, because they have not been in the school very long, they still need much adult support to make it work. Staff have worked hard to become familiar with the learning opportunities provided by the floor robot and are now able to use it confidently.
26. Despite these improvements, as the school is aware and has identified in the school development plan, more remains to be done. The main factor that restricts the development of children's skills in information and communication technology is the staff's lack of confidence in using computers. Although most staff have access to computers at home, few use them regularly to help with their own work. However, all staff are currently undertaking intensive training to improve their skills and the enthusiastic co-ordinator for information and communication technology is working hard to review the policy, hone her own skills and find programs that are appropriate for very young children. The teachers have found that when children are using the computers they demand much adult attention and that much of their teaching time was spent sorting out various problems. They therefore appropriately decided to involve parents in supporting individual children. During the inspection, parents were successfully helping children use a program to dress a teddy by controlling the mouse to move the cursor and drag various items of clothing across the screen.

The school's assessment procedures and use of assessment information to enable teachers to plan work that more closely meets the needs of all children, especially the more able, and show clearly the progress that children make through the school.

27. The school's procedures for assessing children's attainment are broadly satisfactory and have some strong features. However, there are some aspects that could be improved. All teachers and nursery nurses make observations of what children do and say when engaged in normal nursery activities. Comments are made about what children can do in all areas of the curriculum. The system of using self-adhesive labels works efficiently and prevents adults from having to copy out their notes into children's individual records. However, the frequency and quality of entries made by adults vary considerably and some are more descriptive than informative about children's learning. At present, teachers also make assessment notes about individual and groups of children in their evaluations of their teaching in both their group work and planned play sessions. Some of these comments are quite significant but are not always transferred into individual children's records. Teachers do not regularly analyse and evaluate what the observations show them to identify the next steps in children's learning.
28. The school has a general profile of children's attainment on entry to which parents fully contribute and uses a simple screening process to identify children's facility with language. However, there are

no other agreed procedures that enable the school to have a full picture of what all children know, understand and can do when they start school. The summative document that is completed when children leave the school is in the format requested by the schools to which children transfer but is mostly about children's personal, social and emotional development rather than their skills in other areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy and mathematics. It is therefore very difficult for the school to show clearly the progress that children make during their time in the nursery.

29. The school very quickly identifies children with special educational needs, provides appropriate support and closely monitors their progress. Individual education plans include specific and achievable targets that are reviewed regularly and shared with parents. Children with English as an additional language receive appropriate support but the school receives no external help in assessing their language needs. The positive and caring atmosphere of the nursery gives children confidence in practising their language skills. The school's awareness of more able children has been heightened since the last inspection and guidelines on supporting them have been drawn up. Portfolios have also been compiled for communication, language and literacy and mathematics that show that some children's attainment last year was well above what is expected for their age. The school now has a checklist to help identify more able children in communication, language and literacy and mathematics but it is too basic to identify details of their particular strengths. Although in practice teachers often ask more able children more difficult questions, teachers' written planning does not show how the learning of more able children can be extended. Teachers also do not plan activities that give more able children the chance to work together on more challenging tasks.

The monitoring and evaluation procedures of the headteacher, key staff and governors are not regular, rigorous and systematic enough to give a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and inform strategic school development planning.

30. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not rigorous enough and are therefore unsatisfactory. The headteacher is involved in classrooms and carries out observations of teaching in connection with teachers' appraisal but all other monitoring is informal. Teachers are not observed teaching on a regular and systematic basis. The headteacher is involved in curricular planning meetings and therefore monitors teachers' planning informally but does not give feedback to teachers on its good features and how it could be improved. Most governors rely too heavily on the headteacher's reports to governors and the outcomes of the reviews carried out by the local education authority to inform them of the standards of teaching and learning in the school.
31. Although the headteacher has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, the procedures for self-evaluation are not well enough established to enable all involved in the leadership and management of the school, including the governors and staff, to make an effective contribution to school development planning. Some governors play an active part in school life, including monitoring aspects of the school's provision such as that for personal and social education. However, governors are not yet sufficiently involved in determining the agenda for school improvement. The present school development plan is barely adequate. The overview shows appropriate priorities for development but only provides a basic outline of what the school intends to do and does not extend beyond the current year. The action plans for the two targets concerned with improving the provision for information and communication technology are more detailed and useful. Overall, the school development plan does not provide a clear calendar of planned action.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

32. In the context of the school's many strengths, the following matters should be addressed by the governors and staff in writing the action plan, in order to enhance the provision the school makes:

- (1) Further improve provision for information and communication technology in order to raise children's attainment; *
(Paragraphs 25 - 26)
- (2) Improve the school's assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to enable teachers to plan work that more closely meets the needs of all children, especially the more able, and show clearly the progress that children make through the school;
(Paragraphs 27 - 29)
- (3) Establish regular, rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures that involve the headteacher, key staff and governors to give a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and inform strategic school development planning.
(Paragraphs 30 - 31)

* The school has already identified this as an area for improvement in its school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
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
0	18	41	41	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)	50
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a

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	10

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	N/a

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/a

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12. 5

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99 / 00
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	£
Total income	14271
Total expenditure	14123
Expenditure per pupil	236
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	148

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	52	35	2	0	10
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	32	0	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	15	2	2	62
The teaching is good.	75	15	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	25	2	0	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	38	0	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	62	30	2	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	85	12	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	32	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	10	0	0	42

Other issues raised by parents

At the pre-inspection meeting, parents were extremely supportive of the school and appreciative of the work of the headteacher and staff. Some parents felt unable to comment on certain aspects of school life because their children had only attended the school for such a short time. Inspection findings substantiate parents' positive views and agree that drinks and snacks could be made available for children in the middle of sessions.