

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KING'S NORTON NURSERY SCHOOL**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103129

Headteacher: Mrs J. Bowen

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes  
16249

Dates of inspection: 27 - 28 November 2001

Inspection number: 230187  
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Westhill Road Birmingham
Postcode:	B38 8SY
Telephone number:	0121458 3993
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	N/A
Date of previous inspection:	26/01/98

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16249	Mrs S. M. Barnes	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage English as an Additional Language	School's results and children's achievements The quality of teaching and learning Leadership and management Improvement
1112	Mr P. Oldfield	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for children, links with parents
31862	Mrs J. Coop	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equality of opportunity	Attitudes, values and personal development How good are curricular and other opportunities given to children

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The small nursery school is situated in the King's Norton area of Birmingham. Sixty-three boys and girls between the ages of three and four attend the school, some part-time, but the majority for the whole day. The children start in the nursery in the September of the year of their fourth birthday. School meals are not provided and children who stay all day all bring a packed lunch. Due to this it is not possible to judge what proportion would be entitled to free school meals. Only a very small number of the children have special educational needs and no child has a statement of their need. This represents a change since the previous inspection, when just under a tenth of the children were identified as having special needs. Virtually all of the children speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry to school covers the full spectrum, but is average overall, as was noted at the time of the previous inspection. There are still a significant proportion of children with speech and language difficulties. On leaving the nursery, children continue to transfer to a range of over 20 different primary schools. There has been a significant amount of unavoidable long-term staff absence due mainly to illness in the last few years, which has affected the overall pace of school development.

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

This school provides a sound education. All groups of children make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. This is due to the good leadership by the head teacher, and teaching, which is always at least sound and often good. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development due to the very good teaching and provision. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The leadership and management by the head teacher are good and ensure clear educational direction for the school.
- The provision for children's spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- Children make very good progress in their social and personal development and this prepares them well for their time in the primary school.
- Procedures for child protection and welfare are very good.
- The rich and varied curriculum with its strong emphasis on knowledge and understanding of the world helps children to widen their horizons.
- Good procedures promote the children's good behaviour and children have positive attitudes to school and to their learning.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

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

- There is a lack of clear, manageable assessment procedures, linked to the "stepping stones" in national planning, to identify what children know, understand and can do and what the next stage in their learning needs to be.
- Formal systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Despite significant long-term staff absence, the school has improved well since the last inspection. The curriculum has been revised to ensure that children have longer periods of activity and there are times when children with similar learning needs are taught together. By working on a rota, all children have opportunities to benefit from the skills of teachers and nursery nurses. Numeracy teaching is now included in a range of activities across the curriculum. Attendance registers are marked accurately and attendance is monitored effectively. The length of morning and afternoon sessions has been reviewed. They are now of equal length and provide equal teaching time for children attending either session. Assessment procedures have been developed and are better. However, they take a great deal of time to

complete and do not easily give accurate information that relates to the “stepping stones” of the curriculum for young children. Detailed initial assessments are only made in three of the six areas of learning. Now that staffing is stable once more, the school’s capacity to continue to improve is good.

## STANDARDS

There are no standardised assessments for children at the end of nursery school, but inspection evidence shows that children make sound progress overall. Their achievements are at least satisfactory and good for some aspects of learning. Children’s personal and social skills develop very well. All achieve very well and standards are well above expected levels by the time they leave the nursery. In language, literacy and communication, mathematics, creative development and physical development, children’s achievements are satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected, by the time they leave. Children from all groups achieve well and make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in this aspect of learning are above those expected by the time they leave. Children with special educational needs make progress commensurate with their age and ability in all aspects of learning. Children with English as an additional language make steady progress and achieve appropriately. The school does not set formal targets but sets individual aims for children in the main areas of their learning, which it meets.

## CHILDREN’S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children’s attitudes to school are good. They are enthusiastic and involved in all of the activities the school offers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. There is no oppressive behaviour and children work alongside each other happily.
Personal development and relationships	All aspects of personal development and relationships are very good. Children show good levels of respect for the feelings of others. They make very good progress in developing their initiative and in taking responsibility.
Attendance	Good. Parents comment positively about how keen children are to attend.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection it was always at least satisfactory and much good teaching took place. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of literacy, language and communication skills and of mathematical understanding is sound and leads to children making steady gains in their learning. This is also the case in the creative and physical aspects of the curriculum. Teaching of personal, social and emotional aspects of the curriculum are very good. This helps children to make very good gains in their skills and prepares them very well for primary school. Teachers’ management of children is good. Good use is made of time, support staff and resources. As a result, children make good intellectual, physical and creative effort to learn. They find lessons interesting, concentrate well and

develop good levels of confidence and independence. Bright children, those with special educational needs and the few who are not yet fully fluent in English, are taught satisfactorily.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The school provides a wide range of interesting activities for the children. This is particularly the case in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The provision for children with special needs is good and helps them to make steady progress towards their learning targets.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Provision for children with English as an additional language is sound and promotes steady progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for children's personal, spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for children	The school cares very effectively for all of the children. Child protection procedures are very good. Procedures for the monitoring of behaviour and social development are good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting academic progress are satisfactory, but are not linked tightly enough to the "stepping stones" in national planning.

Parents have very positive views of the school. Links with parents are good. Many support their children's learning at home and this has a positive effect on the attitudes children have to school and the progress they make.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher are good. As a result, the school has improved well since the previous inspection despite significant long-term staff absence through illness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Not applicable. The school does not have a governing body.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The evaluation of the key areas for improvement and the school development plan are good.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of all its resources, including the deployment of support staff, who make a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. The accommodation is used well. Daily administration is good. The principles of best value are applied appropriately.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents say teaching is good, children like school, make good progress and they get the right amount to do at home.</li><li>• Behaviour is good and the school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li><li>• School helps children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• There is an interesting range of activities.</li><li>• Leadership and management are good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents do not feel as well informed as they could be about how children are getting on.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees that leadership and management of the school are good. The teaching is sound and children make at least satisfactory progress in all aspects of their learning. Children like school and are given an interesting range of things to do at home. The school makes a positive impact on the social and emotional development of the children and high standards are attained in this aspect of their learning. The inspection finds that information for parents is good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children make sound progress overall. Their achievements are satisfactory overall and for some aspects they are good. Standards on entry to school are broad, and cover the full range usually found amongst three-year-olds. They are similar to those found nationally overall. This reflects the picture at the time of the previous inspection, which noted that there were small fluctuations year by year, but which also judged standards of attainment on entry to be average.
2. During their time in the nursery, children of all levels of attainment and from all groups achieve well and make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They use computers and other equipment confidently. They note the changes in leaves as the weather becomes colder and learn about the way things, such as paths and roads, are laid out in the area around the nursery. Standards in this aspect of learning are above those expected by the time they leave. The standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained in this aspect of learning. The development of children's personal and social skills is very good. They all achieve very well and standards are well above expected levels by the time they leave. Children learn to share and work alongside each other effectively. They are given many good opportunities to learn to take responsibility for the nursery equipment and for themselves. Skills of self-help and independence are very well developed as a result. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In language, literacy and communication, mathematics, creative development and physical development, children's achievements are satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected, by the time they leave. Children are learning to communicate effectively in a range of ways. They are given many suitable opportunities to handle pencils and crayons and to develop early writing skills. They learn to handle books appropriately and enjoy listening to stories. In mathematics they learn to chant numbers and are given regular appropriate opportunities to develop counting and matching skills, making steady progress as a result. They learn to paint, model materials, sing and dance with enjoyment and developing skills. In physical development most children move confidently, develop balancing skills, learn to ride tricycles and throw and catch balls with appropriate dexterity. Progress in mathematics, physical development and creative development is similar to those found at the last inspection. Progress is less rapid in the development of language and literacy skills. Progress in these areas was judged to be very good at the time of the previous inspection. Changes mainly reflect the lower starting point of children in the nursery now.
3. Children who have special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their abilities. They receive good support and their individual learning needs are appropriately met. They are supported carefully in activities and, as a result, they make satisfactory progress. Children with English as an additional language make steady progress and achieve appropriately. The school does not set formal targets but sets broad individual aims for children in the main areas of their learning, which they usually meet.

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

4. As found at the last inspection, children have good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to the nursery. They settle quickly at the start of sessions and happily leave their parents, eager to start activities. This is because of the very good relationships between staff and children and the interesting range of activities available. Children take part eagerly and persevere well with tasks until they are complete. This enables them to make appropriate gains in learning. Many are able to sustain their interest for extended periods without any direct adult intervention, and this improves their self-confidence well. A group of boys, for example, were playing with model people and blocks in a pretend game of soldiers. Each maintained their part in this activity well, co-operating very effectively together as a team. Children with special educational needs, and those

learning English as an additional language, also settle to their tasks and benefit from them because of the good support from all staff, especially the integration assistant.

5. Standards of behaviour are constantly good and this reflects the high expectations of staff and the pleasant working atmosphere they create. Children respect the nursery rules. As a result of their very good relationships, both with staff and with each other, they maintain this good standard of behaviour throughout the day. They take care of resources well, often helping to put them away at the end of sessions. Children are polite and friendly to each other and to staff. They work together well, both in large and small groups. They show caring attitudes towards children with special educational needs and to those who are just beginning to learn to speak English, happily involving them in their play. Lunchtimes are happy social occasions, which help to consolidate social skills well. This well-ordered learning environment allows children to make the most of their time they spend at the nursery.
6. The personal development and relationships within the nursery are very good. These enable children to make responsible choices and to select equipment independently. When waiting for a turn on the computer, for example, children respected each other's time allocation and changed over without fuss. Children also show initiative, for example, wiping the tables after a messy activity without prompting. They often help each other in tasks and show great concern when a friend is hurt. One boy, for example, helped a friend who was struggling to 'programme' a toy to move forward. This help was received warmly, and 'thanks' was shown with a hug. They show good respect and tolerance for each other. When listening to a story, for example, they waited patiently, and without fuss, for a child with special educational needs to respond to a question. As found at the last inspection, the high level of care within the nursery makes a positive contribution to children's development.
7. There are no national comparisons for attendance at this age. Attendance remains good, as at the time of the previous inspection. Parents comment positively about how keen children are to attend. Children arrive on time and sessions start promptly.

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

8. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection it was always at least satisfactory and much good teaching took place. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory, but a small amount was unsatisfactory.
9. The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills and of mathematical understanding is sound and leads to children making steady gains in their learning. Staff plan effectively to provide suitable regular opportunities for learning. These include opportunities to draw and make marks on paper, to look at books and listen to stories. In developing mathematical skills, children are taught to count, to match shapes and to learn appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Teaching and provision in the creative and physical aspects of the curriculum are also satisfactory. Staff plan suitable, regular opportunities for children to develop skills in music, art and dance, to handle small equipment and toys with suitable dexterity and to balance and move around the physical education room and the playground with increasing confidence and skill. As a result, children learn appropriately. Teaching of personal, social and emotional learning is very good and children make very good gains in their skills. This prepares them very effectively for the next stage of their academic life. Teachers and support staff effectively plan many opportunities for the children to share and work alongside each other, to concentrate on tasks for increasing lengths of time and to develop independence and self-motivation in their learning. As a result, children make very good progress in their learning in this area of the curriculum. Teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good overall and children make good progress in their learning as a result. All staff invest a lot of time and thought in the careful planning and preparation of educational trails in the nursery gardens, which parents and children enter into wholeheartedly. This has a positive impact on the levels of support parents

are able to give to their children and the links between work at home and outside school, which all have a positive impact on the progress children make.

10. Staff management of children is good throughout the school and good use is made of time and resources. As a result, because children find lessons interesting, they concentrate well and little time is wasted. The intellectual, physical and creative effort children make in lessons is good. They concentrate for increasing lengths of time, developing good levels of confidence and independence.
11. Staff know the children well and make appropriate demands on them, depending on their individual stages of development and prior attainment. For example, a higher attaining child was quietly encouraged to explore the possibility of tessellation of simple mathematical shapes, which he undertook with studied concentration for far longer than his peers. Staff ensure children are given appropriate challenge and support irrespective of gender, ethnicity or different levels of attainment. The general needs of all children, including higher attaining children, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are taken into consideration and they are taught satisfactorily. This leads to them making satisfactory progress in their learning. Children with special educational needs are appropriately supported in activities and develop good relationships with staff. Specialised approaches are adopted that match particular learning needs well, and as a result, the children are generally interested in activities, are fully included and make satisfactory progress. In the year that they spend in the nursery, the support of staff ensures that children make sound progress in these basic skills. However, the lack of detailed assessments of individual children's knowledge and understanding in these areas, means that support is not always specifically targeted towards meeting the next step in each child's learning.
12. Daily assessments are detailed. Staff spend a great deal of time in their completion. These anecdotal records make appropriate judgements on individual children's attainment and progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, despite the great deal of hard work that staff invest in these records, the information they contain is not easily accessible. It does not provide them with detailed information in line with the "stepping stones" for young children's learning that they can use when planning future lessons.

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

13. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and have been well developed since the last inspection. The curriculum is relevant, well balanced and reflects the aims of the nursery well. It provides a good range of stimulating practical activities both indoors and outside. In particular, the use of the local area, visits and visitors makes a positive contribution to the wide range of experiences available. The school has made good progress in addressing the curriculum issues raised at the last inspection. Pupils now have opportunities to work without interruption, in sessions of equal length, and benefit from working with all staff. This supports children's learning more effectively.
14. Curriculum documentation reflects the early learning goals for children in the foundation stage and there is a good balance between those activities, which children choose for themselves and those led by staff. All staff are involved in planning the curriculum which provides a clear structure for the organisation and management of the nursery. The six areas of learning are well planned for to ensure a well-balanced and interesting range of activities are available. In particular, the strong emphasis on developing children's awareness of the world around them, through interesting practical experiences, is a positive aspect of the curriculum. This is shown, for example, in the development of a nursery school trail within the local area. This develops the use of the local environment as a focus for learning well.

15. Staff use appropriate strategies to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They work hard to ensure that the children have a wide range of activities to support these areas of learning. Writing activities are always available and supported by staff. In this way, children have opportunities to make marks on paper using a wide variety of equipment. They write in the 'office', for example, using pens on 'official' paper, or use large felt pens to draw around animals on 'white boards'. During the activities children are encouraged to hold pens correctly and praised when they achieve success. Similarly, games using mathematical skills encourage children to enjoy counting or making shapes.
16. Regular opportunities are provided for children to make choices. Both boys and girls, children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are treated as individuals and care is taken to ensure that they are provided with a range of different activities. For example children's use of the computer is monitored and recorded carefully. Children, who are shown how to use them, are sensitively guided and supported, so as to ensure that they, too, benefit from activities available.
17. The provision for children with special educational needs is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Children are fully included in the curriculum and they receive a high level of support. The nursery has full regard to the Code of Practice and ensures that outside agencies, staff and parents work together to support the children's needs.
18. Personal, social and emotional development is given a suitable high priority. Routines are clear to ensure that children develop independence. A different topic is planned each term, for example the spring term's topic on ourselves'. These topics ensure that children develop a good awareness of each other's feelings, being safe on the roads and the need to wash hands, for example.
19. The contribution from the community and other institutions to the life of the school is good. Throughout the year, good use is made of trips, visitors and the school grounds. Due to this, the high standards reached in children's knowledge and understanding of the world, noted at the time of the previous inspection, have been maintained. Parents and carers are regularly involved in visits. The school is seen to be an integral part of the wider community, and this has a positive effect on children's learning.
20. Overall, provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. As found at the last inspection, the nursery has a strong commitment to promoting children's moral and social development, and this impacts positively on their behaviour and relationships.
21. There are many opportunities for children to express wonder at the world around them, using all of their senses both in planned and unplanned experiences. The nursery environment, especially the garden, is a place where awe and wonder is a continual feature. Each season brings different delights for children to think about. For example, the changing colour of the leaves, or the tiny new shoots of the seeds they have planted promote joy and excitement. This is very effectively developed with visiting environmental groups. One such group, 'The Centre of the Earth', use interesting and exciting resources to develop children's wonder at the natural world. Using a special mirror, called the 'eye in the sky', children can gaze at the tree canopy. When they collect leaves and flowers and infuse them to learn about different smells, and stick petals and leaves to card to make colour palettes of natural things. In small groups, children are encouraged to discuss their feelings in simple terms. Through sensitive encouragement they are also becoming increasingly aware of special times and people in their lives. One girl, for example, talking about God said, "If I don't want him to go away from me he doesn't, he stays in your heart".
22. Provision for children's social and moral education is also very good. This is effectively promoted through an atmosphere of mutual respect, within the nursery. Stories are an important feature in developing caring and thoughtful young children. They are used very effectively to introduce discussions about sharing or behaving in a caring manner. Children learn to care for animals and living creatures, when visitors such as the RSPCA, come to talk about caring for birds in the

winter, for example. Visits around the local area are used very effectively to encourage appropriate social behaviour. Children have many opportunities to develop caring and sharing attitudes. Special occasions are used very well to promote these. Children have recently been very busy making Christmas cakes and invitations for Christmas. They will be encouraged to share this cake with their friends and family when they visit the nursery to hear their Christmas songs.

23. Cultural provision is good, as found at the last inspection. Children learn to respect each other's beliefs when they celebrate different festivals. Visits by an Asian dancer help children to understand different traditions, for example when they join in the dances to Asian music. Recently the story of 'Handa's surprise' has enabled children to experience something of African cultures, when they taste different fruits and handle African items. Resources and books are selected to raise children's awareness of different cultures, as well as to develop an awareness of their own culture and traditions.

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

24. Overall the strong ethos, well-established daily routines and environment result in a very caring school, which gives a positive emphasis to children's learning and welfare. The high standards of care noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.
25. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Teachers in charge of groups mark the registers carefully at the beginning of each session. If any absences occur, these are clearly indicated. Explanations are given by parents to support all absences. As a consequence, attendance levels are good.
26. The procedures for child protection are well understood and are very good. The head teacher is the designated person. This has been made known to all those who help in the nursery. The school is very welcoming and creates a pleasant atmosphere for lessons, this allows children to feel welcomed and settle into daily routines easily. Good attention has been paid to matters of health and safety. Fire safety is checked and portable electrical testing is done regularly. Risk assessments are undertaken. Good care has been given to the attention and treatment of minor injuries. Trained first aiders are available.
27. The school values good behaviour and has an appropriate policy. Children's behaviour is carefully monitored and if any incidents of inappropriate behaviour occur, there are adults always close at hand to intervene. There were no incidents of poor behaviour seen during the inspection week. The family group arrangements provide high levels of pastoral care.
28. The development of the whole child is a high priority at the school. The personal development of children is clearly recorded and opportunities recorded as they occur. Monitoring by observation is a first option but there are good strategies in place to record language, mathematical and social developments. These are discussed fully at a review meeting. This allows for comparisons with other children to be made, so that areas for development can be identified.
29. The school has appropriate contact with support agencies including the Visiting Teacher Service and health visitors. Individual education and behaviour plans for children with special educational needs are relevant working documents. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that children are making the necessary gains in learning. Targets are specific and relevant. Good links have been developed with outside agencies that advise and support the children well.
30. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. Observations of individual children have been developed and used to draw up individual profiles. A careful analysis of initial assessment data is used to identify children who are more able, and those who need additional support. However, the national guidance for the nursery curriculum has changed since the last inspection. Whilst

improvements have been made, assessment procedures do not reflect the new curriculum guidelines. They could be developed further, to give a better match with the new curriculum.

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

31. The very strong links with parents and their positive views of the school contribute very well to children's academic and social development. The positive views reported previously have been maintained well. Parents are very pleased and satisfied by what the school offers. The school welcomes the strong link with parents and produces clear guidelines so that parents are well aware of the high expectations and good support on offer.
32. The partnership with parents is very effective, starting with pre-nursery home visits. As a consequence, parents feel that their children are in good hands. Effective links have been forged with the parents of children with special educational needs. They are fully informed of their children's progress at regular meetings, but also receive advice and support from a range of outside agencies. Good quality information is provided for parents, supplemented by regular monthly newsletters, which give full information about the many events to be held in the school. Parents are invited to family group concerts to celebrate Christmas. Good opportunities are provided for parents to see the progress of their children. A parents' meeting held in October uses video of the nursery's activities to help parents to see how well their children have settled. Further parents' meetings in January and July give parents the chance to discuss their children's progress. The head teacher and staff are also available for informal discussion at the end of the session. The strong link with parents continues with the high number of parents who volunteer regularly to help in classrooms. This is further supported by work at home. Parents read books regularly with their children and write their comments about progress on index cards. They follow up classroom activities to develop children's learning by taking part in shared activities at home, including such things "story sacks" and making collections of objects. This makes a valuable contribution to children's learning and these links are much valued by the school and parents alike.
33. During the period of the inspection contact was made with a large number of parents and letters and questionnaires included many very positive comments. Parents described the school as 'warm and friendly', providing good levels of care and nurture. The school values and welcomes parents' observations and provides good opportunities to discuss any areas of concern.

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

34. The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher are good. As a result, the school has improved well since the previous inspection. This is in spite of a significant amount of unavoidable long-term staff absence in the last few years. The good quality of leadership, noted at the time of the previous inspection, has been maintained. The aims of the school are known to all staff and reflected well in all aspects of the work of the school. There is a good level of teamwork and all staff have a shared commitment to improvement. Effective systems for delegation are in place. The school development plan is clearly written, highlights appropriate areas for improvement and ensures clear educational direction. It details areas of responsibility and the cost of time and resources. There is a suitably detailed long-term overview, as recommended by the previous inspection.
35. Statutory requirements are all met. The school does not have a governing body and the local education authority is the appropriate authority of control for the school. Its representatives provide the appropriate support and guidance to the head teacher and staff for all aspects of school management.
36. As a nursery, the school has not until now been required by government to develop systems for performance management. While informal systems of monitoring of the quality of teaching and



learning and appraisal of standards are in place, these have not yet been formalised. This is highlighted as part of the school development plan for the forthcoming year. There are no standardised results for attainment in nursery schools and the school sets general targets for individual children's improvements in learning based upon initial assessments. It uses the local education authority's assessment sheet, and its own anecdotal records of attainment. However, these assessments are not yet matched to the curriculum "stepping stones" for young children's learning, and are not fully effective.

37. There are good procedures for induction of new staff, and the school provides an effective environment for the training of new teachers and nursery nurses. Teachers and support staff are suitably matched to the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation and resources are good and used well to enhance the learning opportunities for all children. This is particularly the case with respect to the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world and outside activities.
38. The school has limited devolved financial resources. However, it plans to spend what it has as efficiently as possible. This planning suitably supports educational priorities. Good use is made of new technology, both in the classroom and as an effective administrative tool. Specific grants and funds are used effectively for their designated purpose, for example to support children with special educational needs. The head teacher is the schools' special educational needs co-ordinator and has maintained the good quality provision well. Designated special needs' funds are used well to provide additional support. Other staff in the nursery are well supported in order to ensure a consistent approach. Training is planned to take account of the expected changes to the Code of Practice, to further her own expertise and to develop the school's provision further. The school attends well to the needs of all children and the promotion of racial harmony.
39. The principles of best value are soundly applied and, as at the time of the previous inspection, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

40. In order to raise standards further, the school and the appropriate authority should:-
  - (a) Develop clear, manageable systems in all six areas of the curriculum for the foundation stage, linked to the "stepping-stones" for development, to note what each child knows, understands and can do.
  - (b) Use the information gained to assist in planning activities, which closely match the teaching objectives of the next stage in each child's learning in that area.  
(12, 15, 30, 31, 32, 38)
  - (c) Develop formal systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning (38)

The school has already identified both these areas and has started to make plans to resolve them.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	6	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	43	57	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	49
Number of full-time pupils known to be 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	7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A

### Attendance

There are no national comparisons for attendance in nursery schools.

## **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.3

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	118

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

The school does not have a fully devolved budget, and the local education authority directly funds many aspects of school life. As a result, figures which are available are not directly comparable to other schools. Spending for many aspects is incorporated into local education authorities budget and is not easily separated from them.

## **Recruitment of teachers**

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

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	61
Number of questionnaires returned	22

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	36	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	32	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	27	0	0	18
The teaching is good.	82	14	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	36	14	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	14	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	27	0	0	14
The school works closely with parents.	73	18	5	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	23	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	27	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	27	0	0	23

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

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

41. Children attend the school on either a full-time or part-time basis from the September of the academic year in which they are three until they transfer to a reception class in one of over 20 local primary schools at the age of four. The majority of the children in the current year attend full time, but some attend either morning or afternoon. At the time of the previous inspection most children attended the school on a part time basis. The children are taught in five groups at the start and end of the morning and afternoon. Each group is led either by a teacher or a support assistant and all groups rotate around the nursery over the course of the week so that every child has opportunity to work in all of the areas. The work is carefully planned so that full and part time children all have equal access to the opportunities offered. Extension work is also undertaken for children who are assessed as potentially higher attaining, to ensure that suitably challenging work is offered. As noted at the time of the previous inspection, the attainment of the intake can vary from year to year and the children enter school with differing levels of attainment. However, standards on entry are broadly typical of children of this age.
42. Good arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition into school. Relationships are good and adults provide good role models to the children in their care. Expectations of the children's work and behaviour are appropriately high, and lead to the children making progress which is always at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The teachers and support staff work together well to provide a friendly and effective learning environment for children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is particularly successful in the teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal and social development. Planning is good and is based effectively on the appropriate foundation curriculum for young children and also on assessment of the potential attainment of each child. Teachers plan the curriculum carefully and they work together appropriately with support staff to ensure equality of opportunity in its delivery. Children's behaviour and learning are managed well and as a result, they learn to work and play effectively with others.

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

43. Teaching and learning in this aspect of the foundation curriculum are very good. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained and built upon still further. Children of all levels of prior attainment make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, irrespective of gender, ethnicity and social circumstances. They are on course to exceed the levels expected of them by the time they start in Year 1. Children develop a positive approach to the new experiences school provides. Those who are hesitant are well supported by teachers and other staff so that they take part in the full range of activities. For example, children who are unsure when taking part in physical education sessions have an adult partner who talks to them and encourages them to try all of the activities. Parents commented very positively about how happy their children were as a result of the emphasis that the school places on this aspect of their learning. Children come into the nursery happily at the start of the sessions and separate from their parents and carers with developing confidence. They are welcomed into small groups at the start of each session, led by either a teacher or nursery nurse. All staff work hard to provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere and try to minimise any minor anxiety children may have. As a result, the children feel safe and develop a growing sense of trust. They learn to relate to others and form attachments to other members of the group.
44. Work is planned very effectively so that children learn to understand the needs of others and to take turns and share equipment. They make very good progress in developing self-confidence and learning the routines and procedures of the nursery. Some children still rely on the support of

adults in the class to try some new experiences, but make good overall progress. They try new activities, such as working on the computers. Very good opportunities are given to children to develop self-help skills and to learn to take responsibility for themselves and the equipment they use. All children help to tidy away equipment and prepare the rooms for the next activity. On occasion, an enthusiastic helper has been known to ring the bell unbidden to indicate to staff and children alike that it is time to prepare the room for lunch! Lunchtimes are effectively used as social occasions and all staff encourage children to take responsibility and to learn new skills as they unpack their food and drinks. Quiet music is played and staff interact sensitively with the children, providing effective role models for their behaviour.

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

45. Children's attainment in language and literacy is typical of children of this age. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time they reach Year 1. Standards are not as high, however, as those noted at the previous inspection, where they were judged to be higher than usual. This is due to the higher proportion of children now entering the school with less well-developed language skills. Overall all children, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress during their year at the nursery.
46. Children start with a wide range of ability, but most can listen well to stories and to staff. They follow instructions. Children's spoken language is less well developed. Many have immature skills and have difficulty expressing themselves. Staff use every opportunity when talking and interacting with children to model correct language and to develop and improve the children's vocabulary. When working with children in the playroom, recreating the story of the 'Three Little Pigs', for example, the adult joined in the play. She offered ideas on how the children's play might develop and encouraged discussion.
47. Children enjoy looking at books with staff and recognise and join in familiar stories. Although the library area is accessible, relatively few children make a beeline for this corner to choose books to look at. Staff encourage participation by their actions. When they sit in this area, several children chose to participate in looking at a book with them. Most children recognise their own names.
48. Most children's writing skills are at a very early stage of development. A few can form recognisable letters, but they are not yet able to write their own names through tracing over them, for example. Children are given many suitable opportunities to use a variety of pens and other writing implements to make marks on paper. They sustain their attention well while they do this, for example, when writing in the "office", or when using the drawing and writing table. This aspect of provision has improved since the previous inspection when it was judged that there were too few opportunities for children to engage in extended drawing activities in order to consolidate their developing skills.
49. The very few children with English as an additional language do not receive specialised support from other agencies, but all staff try hard to develop their language skills and to include them in all activities. Staff have researched a few simple words and phrases in Portuguese and use them to help to make one child feel more secure. Children with special educational needs have effective support and a specialised language programme is used appropriately to develop their early communication skills. However, the lack of more detailed and specific assessments of children's language and literacy skills, linked to the "stepping stones" identified in the national guidance, impacts adversely on teaching and learning. It prevents more positive and targeted support being planned, that would focus on particular skills and so move learning forward at a faster rate.
50. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Staff have good relationships with the children and engage in talk with them to develop their language skills. Opportunities, such as snack time or at the end of sessions are used well. Planning of activities is appropriate but not always well matched to individual children's level of ability.

## **Mathematical development**

51. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is sound. The children are on course to achieve the standards expected by the time they transfer to Year 1. Staff work together well to provide children with a suitable range of activities to increase their knowledge and vocabulary for number. The children show an interest in numbers and counting and enjoy joining in with the activities provided and with number rhymes and songs. The standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.
52. The curriculum is suitably planned to ensure that children are given a suitable range of opportunities to learn about number. There is an appropriate range of interesting activities for the children to choose from, such as puzzles and counting tasks, as well as water and sand play. These provide opportunities to measure and pour and to learn about volume, as well as developing mathematical language. Although some children do not count with confidence beyond two, most children are able to chant to five, and some can say what number is one more than 12. Teaching reinforces and develops number skills appropriately. During the week of inspection, staff worked effectively to show how some shapes fit together without any gaps, how to count to five and beyond and to sort toy zoo animals into groups of one to five.
53. Staff show considerable patience in helping children to learn, and are alert to opportunities to join in discussions with children. During registration, staff encourage interest in number by asking for help to count how many children are present in each group. When sharing fruit at snack time, they maximise opportunities to talk about sharing the fruit equally. All staff make good use of all opportunities for children to develop their mathematical vocabulary. They talk to them as they build wooden toy train tracks, or play on the mat with toy cars and trucks, emphasising mathematical vocabulary, such as “straight” and “curved” and “long” and “short”.
54. Staff make appropriate use of opportunities to link mathematical development to other areas of learning. The activities provided and the sound quality of the teaching give the children many opportunities to use mathematical language for shape and measures as they work. Children show an interest in shape and space by playing with clay and other objects and making arrangements in sand and with other materials for collage. They match some shapes by recognising similarities and orientation, as for example when they complete jig-saw puzzles. Children are beginning to learn the names of some of the colours and the names given to the different groups for registration helps with this. Children with special educational needs are suitably supported and make steady progress in line with their peers. Higher attaining children are given appropriately challenging tasks when they work as “orange group” and also as they take part in the general activities in the nursery.

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

55. The majority of children attain well in this area of learning. As a result of well-focussed interesting activities, they are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time they start Year 1. Boys and girls from all groups, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is due to the very good provision and the good teaching. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Staff set up interesting activities that keep children involved. This was seen when children made a fruit salad, for example. Using all of their senses children not only tasted different fruits, but also worked together to make a salad. This opportunity was used effectively by the teacher to teach about food, to develop language skills and to emphasise health issues such as the need to wash hands.
56. Children wonder at the natural world and have a well-developed understanding of features around them. Their work in this aspect is particularly effective as they are introduced to features of the local community through well-planned walks and visits to the local canal or train station. During these visits, they also become aware of differences between the past and present, for example when they tried on old-fashioned clothes. In recent work linked to the story of ‘Handa’s surprise’,

children experienced something of African cultures, when they tasted different fruits and handled African artefacts.

57. The school garden is used well to develop an understanding of growth and change. Children plant seeds and bulbs and watch the changes in the trees. These promote their interest and understanding of the differences in seasons. Visits by farmyard animals such as sheep, hens and ducks are also used effectively. Visitors bring a wealth of different learning opportunities to the nursery. The visiting speaker during the Electricity Road-show, for example, introduced a range of activities that used simple circuits to develop children's understanding of electricity and its uses. A visiting artist showed staff and children how to create a living willow tunnel, which children continue to play in on dry days. Celebrations of different faith festivals are also used effectively to develop children's early understanding of other traditions and beliefs.
58. Children learn to use computers confidently. When working on the computer, they know that moving the mouse will make changes on the screen and many select different options competently. Adults supervise this work well and children know the routines. Their personal and social development is also enhanced by the simple routines for sharing computer time, for example they use sand-timers to indicate that it is someone else's turn.

### **Physical development**

59. Teaching in this area is sound and staff ensure that children are given a good range of both structured and unstructured opportunities to develop their physical skills. These include physical education lessons indoors, out-door sessions with tricycles, scooters and small cars, play in the willow tunnel and opportunities to handle small equipment such as beads, pencils and other tools. As a result, children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make satisfactory progress overall in the development of their fine physical skills and in their skills of co-ordination and balance. They are on course to achieve the levels expected when they enter Year 1. The standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.
60. Children move around the playground area with suitable control, avoiding collisions. They climb with developing skill to reach the playhouse; some children use alternate feet as they go up the steps. Children handle construction toys and small tools with appropriate levels of dexterity for their age. Many use crayons and pencils with appropriate skill when "writing" in the "office" and painting or drawing. The teaching of these fine physical skills is satisfactory. When using small tools such as rollers and graters or whilst playing with clay, they demonstrate increasing control and pay appropriate attention to safety. Lessons in the playroom each week, in addition to the use of large equipment outside, enable children to develop their skills of balancing and muscle control. Some children are very hesitant when using indoor equipment in their first few weeks in the school, as it is obviously a new experience. Staff ensure that these children are given suitable encouragement and adult support so that they can take part appropriately. The sessions are short, and for most children, especially the most timid, long enough. More adventurous and enthusiastic children, however, enter wholeheartedly into setting trails, which they then have only a short time to cross. They would benefit from longer and more physically challenging sessions on occasions.

### **Creative development**

61. The teaching of the creative area of learning is satisfactory. As a result, children make satisfactory progress in the development of their creative skills. Teachers provide a suitably wide range of opportunities, which enables children to develop their skills and confidence. They have suitable opportunities to learn a variety of techniques and use a range of materials to express themselves. They use paint, pencils, crayons, clay, fabric and glue to make pictures and collages linked to their work in other areas. Children of all levels of prior attainment, and from all groups, make satisfactory progress in developing these skills. They are on course to reach the national expectation by the time that they enter Year 1. The satisfactory progress children make, noted at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained.



62. Staff place suitable emphasis and respect on the work that children do. The teaching and public areas are attractive and colourful with bright displays and digital photographs of the children at work, as well as examples of their creative work, displayed for parents and visitors to enjoy. These displays include collages of leaves, constructions using sticks, leaves and clay, weavings with wool and other materials and displays related to the topic of Diwali. Children are beginning to identify different colours and enjoy using paint, clay and collage to explore texture and space.
63. Children have weekly music lessons when they learn to sing songs, responding to the music with hand actions and clapping. They have many opportunities in their play to explore tuned percussion instruments to make simple tunes. They have suitable opportunities to listen to music in a range of styles. Quiet music is played when they eat their lunch. Music of the "Three Little Pigs" is played in the home corner and children use a variety of instruments to make sounds to accompany this, forming an impromptu band, encouraged by support staff and playing together with great enjoyment.
64. As one of their many opportunities for independent activity, they enjoy role-play, especially in the home and office areas. They develop appropriate skills in imagination and communication. They pretend that one object represents another, as when improvising with model cakes when "frying breakfast", and use available resources as props to support their role-play. They enter into lengthy "chats" to people at home using the telephones in the "office" area. They respond very positively to opportunities to develop their senses, in a suitable range of activities in the garden area, such as when they "repaint" equipment with water. They also use the computers regularly to create simple patterns and pictures. Children engage happily in role-play in the company of others and play co-operatively. Teachers and support staff encourage children to make their own choices, such as in choosing paper for painting and which tools they will use, and this has a positive impact on their independence, personal and social development.