

INSPECTION REPORT

SANDAL AGRIGG PRE 5 CENTRE

Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 132014

Head of Centre: Mrs Kathy Stevens

Reporting inspector: George Brown
21060

Dates of inspection: 15 -17 January 2001

Inspection number: 230203

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE NURSERY

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community Pre 5 Centre
Age range of pupils:	3 - 4 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	255 Barnsley Road Sandal Wakefield West Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	Wakefield Local Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Pending
Date of previous inspection:	7 October 1997 (Section 5)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
(Ofsted No. 21060)	George Brown	Registered inspector	Under fives Equal opportunities	What sort of nursery is it? How high are the standards? Results and achievements How well is the nursery led and managed?
(Ofsted No. 9160)	Keith Baker	Lay inspector		Children's attitudes, values and personal development How well does the nursery care for its children? How well does the nursery work in partnership with parents?
(Ofsted No. 25376)	Lynn Aly	Team inspector	Special educational needs The autism resource	How well are children taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities offered?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The nursery is part of the Sandal Agbrigg Pre 5 Centre that was opened as a joint initiative between the community, social services and the education department of Wakefield. The Centre provides education and care for children under five and aims to provide an integral and flexible service for families within the local community and beyond. The nursery is popular and, as at the time of inspection, its 80 part-time places are usually taken. The intake of children is over three terms and most stay for up to five terms before moving on to neighbouring infant schools. Ten children had been recently admitted at the time of the inspection. The families represent a broad social mix, but attainment of children on entry suggests that significant numbers have below-average literacy and numeracy skills. The speech and communication skills of many children are particularly low. The nursery also includes an Autism Resource for up to six part-time children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. There are no children from minority ethnic backgrounds. The 25 children on the special educational needs register represent an above-average figure. Eight children have Statements of Special Educational Needs, including all those who attend the Autism Resource. There are no full-time children entitled to free school meals. The Pre 5 Centre is unique to Wakefield and includes Family Support programmes and parent/toddler facilities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good nursery that provides an effective foundation for the future learning of all its children. They are well prepared for work in reception classes at the time of transfer. Children make mainly good progress in all areas of learning and, by the time they are five, most will reach the standards expected for their age. However, the level of oral communication used by many children is low. Teaching and leadership are good. All resources and funds are well managed to ensure the best value for the children. The Autism Resource is a very good, inclusive, part of the nursery and children progress well. The nursery provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Almost all teaching is good. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young children and this helps to promote good levels of learning and progress.
- Children enjoy nursery life, and this reflects in their positive attitudes towards behaviour and learning.
- The curriculum provides a very good range of challenging activities across all areas of learning.
- Staff form a highly effective team, creating a nursery that is exciting and stimulating for children.
- High levels of care and support encourage children to become effective learners.
- There is a very effective partnership between nursery, parents and carers.
- Children with autism are very well supported and are integrated successfully into the nursery.

What could be improved

- The wider use of activities to help encourage children to talk more freely and effectively.
- The use of information gained from everyday assessment to help plan children's future learning more accurately.
- The involvement of the Management Committee in the everyday running of the nursery.
- The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating children's standards together with the quality of teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The nursery has made good progress in dealing with weaknesses identified in the inspection of October 1997 and shows a desire to improve still further. Policy statements and documentation have been simplified and are now easily accessible. The contributions made by parents to their children's records have improved and potential helpers in the nursery are well prepared. The means of assessing children on entry has improved, although more could be done with the results of this together with that of

everyday assessment. Resources have been improved in relation to science, sand, water and outdoor play. The nursery has also made a good start in relation to the introduction of the new Foundation Stage that lasts until the end of the reception year.

STANDARDS

Children enter nursery with below-average standards but achieve well. By the time they transfer to their reception classes, most four-year-olds are likely to attain the standards expected for their age within all the recognised areas of learning. A relatively small number of children reach above-average standards. All children settle quickly into nursery routines and make particularly good progress in relation to personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world, areas in which the nursery provides well. In language and literacy most children learn quickly that print conveys meaning, and almost all of them can list a few objects beginning with a particular letter sound. Oral communication is generally weak, with many children unable to express themselves clearly or to use appropriate language structures for their age. Early attempts at writing are at the expected level. In mathematics, most children sort and count appropriately for their age and know something about different shapes and the days of the week. As part of knowledge and understanding of the world, children learn well from handling different materials and show special enthusiasm for animals and other living things. Standards in creative development are broadly at the level expected for the age of the children, with most able to paint and use malleable materials to support their learning in other areas. In their physical development, children are able to move, dance and play to the level expected for their age. Imaginative play is good in the outside area, which is set up and monitored particularly well by vigilant staff. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Children in the Autism Resource benefit from highly specialised help and make very good progress, overall.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the nursery	Children like the nursery and show good levels of interest and enthusiasm during most activities. They are outwardly keen to take part to the full and clearly enjoy familiar routines, faces and activities.
Behaviour	Consistently good, and this plays a significant part in learning. No outwardly aggressive behaviour was seen during the inspection period.
Personal development and relationships	Children respond positively to one another, although this is sometimes rather muted as several still prefer to play by themselves or alongside an adult. Relationships are good, overall, particularly between children and adults.
Attendance	Although not statutory, parents and staff take attendance very seriously and good levels of children's attendance occur on a daily basis.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children:	
Sessions 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 was good in 47 per cent of observed sessions and in a further 32 per cent it was very good. Teaching was satisfactory in 21 per cent of all sessions and there was no unsatisfactory

teaching. The substantial amount of good and very good teaching supports most effectively the needs of all children and helps promote their everyday achievement. Children learn well, overall. Staff are very knowledgeable about the learning needs of young children and devise a wide range of stimulating activities for children to enjoy on a daily basis. There is some good teaching in all areas of learning. It is particularly good in aspects of children's personal, social and emotional development, together with the teaching of physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. All staff work hard to promote personal development and this is supported well throughout the entire Centre with its many strands related to children and family support. The teaching of early literacy and mathematical development is satisfactory, overall, but there are many occasions when it is good, particularly with the use made of stories and practical counting. The teaching of children's oral communication could be improved. Staff use the outside area with considerable imagination and skill and children make consistently good progress in their co-ordination and ability to use outdoor resources. Teachers plan well and ensure that children experience a wide range of creative activities, such as painting, weaving and baking. The use of the computer is satisfactory, although learning in this area is somewhat affected by the currently low levels of provision. The amount and quality of adult support is a strength of the overall teaching provision, with significant amounts of teaching undertaken by family workers who are qualified nursery nurses. The levels of teamwork and corporate planning are strong and highly influential on learning. Great care is exercised when managing children and time and learning resources are used imaginatively and well. Although assessment is carried out regularly, the results obtained are not always used well enough to help identify the next stage of learning for differently attaining groups of children. Children with special educational needs are taught and supported well, particularly those in the Autism Resource.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good provision for young children. Opportunities for learning are closely matched to children's needs and planned activities and experiences are generally exciting and enjoyable.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. Children's needs are well identified and are supported well by good planning and sensitive adults. Children in the Autism Resource are very well monitored and cared for.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for children's social and moral development is very good and is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. Personal development is inherent in almost everything that the nursery believes in and attempts.
How well the nursery cares for its children	A strength of the overall provision. Children's needs are well known, and these are supported through a caring environment and by committed staff who value individual children. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring children's welfare are very good.

A strong and effective partnership exists between the nursery and parents and carers. Parents are extremely supportive of nursery life and all that it does for their children. Wherever possible, parents are involved in the ongoing stages of their children's nursery education and their interest helps children's own sense of worth, self-esteem and progress. The flow of information between nursery and children's homes is excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the Head of Centre and other key staff	The Head of Centre is a good leader and manager and, despite not being teacher trained, she has a strong and accurate vision as to the direction the nursery should take. She has built an experienced team of teachers and family workers around her and together they exert considerable influence on daily standards and the learning of young children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	No governing body as such exists. The Centre is in process of forming a new Management Committee that will oversee the full life of the Centre including the nursery. Because of their wider brief, the Centre's managers are unable to oversee the work and standards in the nursery to the same degree as a more traditional governing body. Community interest is, however, very strong, with a high ratio of parental representation on both the present and proposed management structure.
The nursery's evaluation of its performance	A relatively weak area with no recognised mechanism in place to help monitor children's standards as well as the quality of teaching and learning. The newly appointed Deputy Head of Centre is an experienced teacher and will help oversee this important role.
The strategic use of resources	Learning resources are plentiful and are well used on a daily basis. Available finance, including specific grants, is used well to help promote good learning among the children. The principles of best value are applied well in the interests of the nursery and the children.

Within a generally spacious Pre 5 Centre, the main accommodation for nursery children is good and the levels of staffing and learning resources are both very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to nursery • The teaching is good and the staff are committed and caring • The nursery and its staff are very approachable about their various queries • The nursery is very well led and managed • Their children make good progress and they are well prepared for infant schooling • The nursery works in close and fruitful partnership with parents and carers 	

The inspection bears out all the positive points made here by parents and reiterates that these good and very good features exert considerable influence on children's learning. The parents' views of the nursery are extremely positive and nothing of significance was expressed by way of concern at either the parents' meeting or in response to the questionnaire. Following a few queries, most parents realise that homework and extra-curricular activities are not usually part of nursery life.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children are admitted to the nursery after their third birthday, usually either in September, January or Easter, but admissions also go on throughout the year. Many will stay up to five terms before moving on to neighbouring infant schools. Children enter nursery with a broad range of prior attainment and previous experience. Teacher assessment on entry indicates that many children have slightly below average skills in pre-school literacy and numeracy and also in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their oral speech and communication is frequently weak. Social skills vary considerably and significant numbers of children lack confidence. Several new children had only been in nursery for a few days at the time of the inspection. Almost all children, however, are eager to learn and after entering the nursery they make good progress in much of their work and personal development. By the time they leave nursery and move on to neighbouring infant or primary schools, they have achieved well in skills, knowledge and understanding, and most are on course to attain average levels by the end of their reception year. Standards have remained broadly similar to those reported during the previous Section 5 inspection.
2. The nursery places considerable emphasis on the personal and social development of children. As a result, children make quite rapid strides in this area, building on their growing experiences and relationships. A significant number are poor communicators but gradually grow in confidence as their range of experiences also increases. Listening skills are better, and most children show sound levels of concentration for their age. When given a choice, most children tend to persevere well with a single activity and explore its potential to a high degree rather than move unproductively between too many activities. Children follow instructions satisfactorily and enjoy the repetitive nature of routines and familiar faces. For their age, they are particularly adept at tidying up, and staff are careful to build this into everyday routines. Relationships between children are generally good and invariably good between adults and children. In time, most come to accept the needs and rights of others and most share available adult time very well. Staff develop a very consistent approach to positive behaviour and children respond well to the expectations of adults in this respect. They also learn about right and wrong choices and most understand why they should behave and react in a particular way, although only a minority can express their feelings and views with confidence and clarity.
3. Staff plan satisfactorily to reinforce children's language across all areas of learning. However, this is not reinforced throughout a given topic and many pupils use a restricted form of oral language. Their role-play is fun and much enjoyed, but oral language is often repetitive and unimaginative. However, most have begun to understand the purpose of print and can readily identify their own names and those of others when they register with their parents. Picture books are handled sensibly and children enjoy familiar stories. A few higher-attaining children are able to make inferences; for example, what it must be like to be the 'Little Gingerbread Man.' Language is also carefully built up by learning nursery rhymes by heart and about half the children are familiar with written captions that depict daily weather. Almost all children understand that letters make sounds and they delight in the letter of the week, showing great interest in those objects they can see beginning with the letter 'b'. Their early attempts at under-writing and overwriting the teacher's script are broadly at the level expected for their age.
4. In their mathematical development, children attain broadly the level anticipated for their age, although understanding of basic number varies considerably. Most can count to five and recognise that this is smaller than ten. A few count accurately to twelve and beyond but cannot necessarily relate actual objects to the number in question. Most can re-sequence numerals pinned on a small washing line, in order to give the right order, but others cannot do this with any consistency. Children are rather slow in building up a basic number vocabulary. Following a

project on clocks, children recognise numbers on a clock face and know how the pointers give different messages. When using building blocks they recognise the feel of different shapes, and some show some understanding of basic properties, as they link them together to make their own constructions.

5. Staff plan well to give children a deeper understanding of their everyday world. There is much provided for them to explore, investigate and sharpen their senses. For example, all children are curious about the nursery's collection of baby snails and are fascinated by the display of different types of wood that they can compare by feeling. They reach the level expected for their age when working in wet and dry sand and know how a block of ice will feel and react when it is placed in the water tray. However, they sometimes find it difficult to choose and use the right words to describe what they are seeing and feeling. Their work outside the nursery is at a satisfactory level. Some understand the word 'community' and many visit the local church and supermarket. This helps to broaden their experiences and increases their knowledge and understanding of why things are placed where they are. Most children have a sound awareness of other cultures and use pictures and artefacts well to explain about the Chinese New Year. Their work on computers is at the level expected for young children, although progress in this area is affected by a lack of hardware.
6. The physical development of children is at the level expected for their age, although in dance, their standards are higher than this. Most move with appropriate imagination and, particularly outside, do so with increasing confidence. The nursery is usually very full and most children show good awareness of space and matters of safety. In dance, they move well to taped music and understand how to link a few movements together to make a simple sequence. The fine control needed to cut string using a pair of scissors was beyond several children who attempted it. During more rigorous outdoor play, most use bicycles and pedal cars to the anticipated level and their play is quite imaginative due to the very good facilities provided by the staff.
7. Standards of attainment in creative development are in line with those expected nationally for children of this age. Most have an increasing awareness of how different medium can be used to model, paint, print and weave. Some good examples of all these techniques were on display. Children hold brushes appropriate to their age and try hard to bring shape and form to their paintings. Creative role-play is below average for a significant number, particularly when it involves new language. Singing is tuneful and most children acquire a good range of songs and nursery rhymes that they are proud to present to visitors.
8. The standards reached by children with special educational needs vary considerably according to their learning difficulties. Autistic children improve their ability to sequence play by using repetitive actions and by the constant praise and encouragement offered by adults. All special needs children progress well because of their own enthusiasm and through careful teaching that breaks down basic learning into small 'stepping-stones' enabling them to taste success before moving on to new things.
9. All children achieve well in much of their learning and make good progress as a result of their own physical and creative efforts. Many, however, are still very reliant on the teacher for guiding them through an activity, but part of every day is set aside for independent choice and work and this is paying dividends in terms of children maturing and beginning to use their initiative.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the children are good, thus maintaining the findings recorded at the last inspection. Parents report that their children are enthusiastic about coming to school and are very happy with the values being taught and the standards of behaviour expected. All the staff provide good role models and have high expectations of their young pupils. Overall, staff, children and parents work together as a family community and this promotes a very positive teaching and learning environment.

11. Most children are confident when they arrive for nursery sessions. They are invariably greeted by their class teacher or key worker and leave their departing parents or carers with the minimum of fuss. Even the youngest children, with only a few days' attendance, soon join in the various activities available and adjust quickly to nursery routines. Children listen well and follow instructions. This was seen to good effect during a dance lesson, when children responded enthusiastically to a music tape as well as to teacher-led instruction. Another example was the impressive success the teacher had in skilfully getting autistic children to converse and engage in activities during circle-time. Children are interested in their learning. They are prepared to learn by their mistakes, and, although some children are inclined to be passive, most respond confidently to questions. Concentration levels improve as they progress through the nursery and this was particularly noticeable in the observations of the four-year-olds attempting practical work. Children learn to share and to work harmoniously with others, and a number of activities, such as the little garage set up in the playground, allow the children to do this. The staff work very hard and patiently to ensure that the children with special educational needs stay focused on their tasks, and are integrated happily as much as possible into the day-to-day activities of the nursery. The good teaching observed throughout the inspection has a direct bearing on the good attitudes and behaviour of all the children.
12. The behaviour of children is as good as that recorded during the last inspection. Very little inappropriate behaviour was seen during this inspection. The children move around the nursery sensibly and for the most part quietly. They enjoy playing inside and outside the nursery with the wide range of toys and equipment, and treat these with care. Although not a statutory requirement, attendance is good and the children arrive for morning and afternoon sessions on time. Indeed, this is an important and valuable time for them and their parents.
13. The children's personal development and relationships are good and are underpinned by the key worker system, which ensures that designated staff concentrate on the intellectual, social and emotional growth of individual children. Similarly, the good quality of teaching and the stimulating range of activities provided, help extend the children's natural curiosity, confidence and self-esteem. Children learn how to develop the social skills to work alongside other children and adults. Staff use the activity work effectively to encourage the children to converse and develop their investigative skills. Relationships between most of the children are good and there is very positive, supportive, interaction with children who have special needs. Children show consideration for others in their work. They are learning how to take responsibility; for example, in self-registering their attendance for the morning and afternoon sessions, selecting resources from the boxes and open shelves and in tidying-up well at the end of each activity.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and is never less than satisfactory. Well-qualified family workers provide good quality teaching support. The teamwork is a strength of the provision and has a positive impact on the children's everyday learning.
15. Teaching was good or better in 47 per cent of observed lessons. It was very good in a further 32 per cent of lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The overall good quality of teaching and learning is based on thorough planning across all areas of learning. All staff have a good working knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the new Foundation Stage. They are hard-working, conscientious and determined to provide experiences that meet the needs of all children. Planning is successful in providing highly active learning as well as involving investigating, repeating, revising and consolidating the children's developing knowledge, skills and understanding. Parents also praised the quality of teaching and the support given to their children by all the adults in the nursery.
16. Examples of very good teaching and learning were particularly evident in the excellent start to

each session, when adults provided very good role models for the children in their social interaction with parents and carers. Children quickly learn the rules and routines of the nursery as a direct result of the effective planning, organisation and teamwork of all the staff. Activities are set out invitingly, careful thought being given to the presentation of resources and their impact on learning. For example, a small group of children entered the nursery confidently and after self-registering, chose to sit together sociably at the dough table. They shared out the dough and the interesting utensils sensibly and played with them in a mature manner. In direct contrast, a small dispute arose in the sand tray between two less mature children. A teacher quickly observed what was happening and moved quickly to support them. She explained sensitively the importance of sharing and helped the children to negotiate who was to use the favourite tool first. Adults are very effective in assessing the individual needs of children in many similar situations, and teaching and learning are well supported by many such skilful interventions. Planning is structured effectively, such as in the well-thought-out entry procedures, but it is also flexible enough to allow both direct and indirect teaching and learning to take place in both indoor and outdoor play settings.

17. During the most effective sessions teachers use questions effectively to encourage and challenge children to develop their vocabulary and their independent thinking. In such a situation, a small group of children were captivated by the eating habits of large African snails. The teacher guided the children's thinking very skilfully by modelling language for the less able or posing questions to challenge the more able as they observed the snails through magnifying glasses. A reference book provided by the teacher was looked at eagerly as she guided children in finding out what the snails liked to eat best. The very good balance between adult intervention and the children's own initiative meant that that most youngsters had the confidence to persevere and concentrate with their observations for a good length of time. Careful discussions between the staff at the initial planning stage mean that all adults are well prepared to respond to children in a variety of situations and this resulted in some very successful teaching and learning situations. For example, a group of four higher-attaining children demonstrated good levels of co-operation and concentration as a result of their interactions with a family worker. Through effective organisation and thoughtful questions, the adult established clear links to literacy, numeracy and geography. The children discussed and drew a route to the Three Bears' house and were helped to write about features that Goldilocks might meet on the way.
18. A consistent feature found within all the teaching, is the influence of skilled, caring adults who provide stimulating and interesting activities for the children in their care. Well-established routines and well-prepared sessions with attractive resources provide relevant experiences. Lively approaches to support learning are also applied consistently amongst all the adults, with appropriate intervention to engage children in the learning process. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and both long-term and medium-term planning clearly identify the stages of learning and experiences that children need to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching in more structured situations, such as 'Bus Stop' sessions, where children are grouped broadly by age, is good, overall, although short-term planning does not identify sufficiently opportunities to develop learning, particularly in skills of oral communication. The opening 'Hens and Chicks' session is also at times too heavily loaded with learning content and adults find it difficult to get through it all in such a short space of time. This means that there is insufficient detailed support for the family workers in helping to meet the needs of more able children, for example, when they lead these sessions. The children are encouraged by the adults to bring in resources from home to help support the activities and a number of children respond well by bringing in objects beginning with the letter 'b'.
19. Teaching and learning for children with special educational needs are consistently good. Care is taken to include them in all nursery activities. Careful support and questioning by all the adults help promote effective learning. For example, in a small group session the adult chose a child with communication problems to role-play a character in an action rhyme. As a result, she continued to play the game for a further period of time after the main activity had finished. Another child gained in confidence as she was chosen to find objects beginning with 'b' in a large bag and was encouraged to listen more carefully as a result. Skilled management of these situations means that all children are included positively in the life of the nursery, which raises

their self-esteem as learners. The integration of children with autism is particularly well done. Adults work closely together to support the children, regularly assessing their progress and planning the next step of learning.

HOW GOOD ARE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

20. The curriculum provided by the nursery is very good. It is broad and balanced, and teachers' planning follows closely the nationally recommended areas of learning. This gives the children a firm foundation as they move on to school. It is based on a clear understanding and belief in the importance of a high quality curriculum that underpins all future learning. This is very effective because the staff provide well-planned purposeful activities with appropriate intervention to engage the children in the learning process. A particular strength of the provision is the high status given to the involvement of parents as partners in the curriculum so that children see the adults working together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.
21. The curriculum is planned comprehensively to include all the recommended areas of learning and provides effective teaching and learning opportunities in both indoor and outdoor settings. Planning is effective because it takes into account the children's early experiences and builds on these, enabling children to develop positive attitudes to learning without fear of failure. A particular strength is the very effective inclusion of children with special educational needs, with good systems in place to ensure that planning considers the diverse needs of all the children. Procedures for promoting the children's personal development are good and are effective in supporting a learning environment where all children are valued and respected.
22. Effective links are made in the planning of each area of learning, with opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills. These are clearly matched to the 'stepping-stones' within the Foundation Stage, which help to develop communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The use of large notices and labels could be increased to ensure that all children learn from the rich and ever-changing 'print environment.' Weekly organisation identifies very clearly the role and organisation of each adult in supporting this development. However, planning does not always provide sufficient detail, particularly when children are involved in focus groups with family workers. This tends to slow down the development of communication and oral skills of children with a wide range of abilities and attainment.
23. Constructive relationships are formed with the local school. Children have the opportunity to visit their forthcoming reception class and there are regular staff contacts between schools and the nursery. By the time children transfer, infant staff have received all the information they require to provide well for each child's needs.
24. The provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Adults provide very positive role models for the children and sensitive intervention ensures that all children learn the importance of treating adults and one another with courtesy and respect. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Children are encouraged to develop curiosity and excitement about the world around them, mainly through the many imaginative and creative opportunities provided for worthwhile learning within the nursery. For example, a very aesthetically pleasing display about wood required children to 'Come and touch' or say 'What do I feel like?' Planning, however, does not clearly identify more structured opportunities within termly themes, for example, to promote further the development of spiritual awareness and reflection.
25. Provision for children's moral development is very good. High standards of behaviour are expected from the time of entry into the nursery and parents and carers are jointly involved in supporting the children's development. Children are made aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and adults are very sensitive in their interventions as they teach the importance of right and wrong. During a story about 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', for example, the teacher used a more able

child's comment effectively: 'Goldilocks was bad wasn't she?'... to develop the children's understanding of right and wrong. Thoughtful and measured discussions with children occur as a result of small conflicts, such as taking turns or the possession of a particular piece of equipment. There is also positive encouragement by the adults to help raise children's self-esteem and to promote considerate attitudes to others.

26. The caring atmosphere present throughout the nursery, and the high quality of relationships, help support the children's social development very well. The effective policy for managing the children's behaviour provides clear guidelines on how all staff can manage children's behaviour in the most positive way. The nursery is successful in helping the children to develop interest, perseverance and positive attitudes towards their work and to one another. Planned opportunities support the children in the development of confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment in their achievements. For example, the children are expected to take some responsibility for their own learning, and resources and equipment are planned effectively to help support this. Children quickly learn the 'Job Squad' routine at the end of activity sessions and willingly tidy up equipment. For example, older children are encouraged to help younger or less able children, or prepare snacks for others.
27. An effectively-planned programme of visits and visitors to the nursery helps the children to develop a knowledge and understanding of their own culture and community. Taking part in the observation of traditions throughout the year, such as Bonfire Night or birthday and Easter celebrations, for example, or visits to the local church or supermarket make a regular contribution to cultural development. Celebrating the festivals of Eid and Diwali acknowledges and develops the children's early understanding of differences and similarities. Imaginative role-play in a make-believe garage, hospital or hotel helps children to explore the world around them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. Effective strategies are in place to help identify and support those children who have special educational needs. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the process at every stage. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss the children allocated to each of the key worker groups and this means that the special needs co-ordinator has good opportunities to discuss the progress of targets in the children's Individual Education Plans and set new ones as necessary. An improved system to review and monitor this progress through observation of the children in the nursery has yet to be fully implemented. Special arrangements are made to support children with autism and this is a strength of the care exercised by the nursery in general. Well-qualified learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the quality of provision for these children.
29. The previous report had little to say about the care and welfare of the children but the general impression was that arrangements were very positive. This is still the case. The nursery environment is a very supportive one and the care of the children is a prime consideration of all the staff. The children find the nursery a warm, welcoming and orderly community. Overall, the care and support provided for children has a significant impact on their attitudes, personal development and learning.
30. There is a good programme of activities to ensure that the transition from home to nursery is as smooth as possible. Each child is assigned a key worker who remains linked to that child throughout their stay in nursery. A visit is made to the home and parents are encouraged to talk about what their child can do and to contribute to the initial assessment. Consequently the children settle in quickly to the life of the nursery. Staff know the children particularly well. They welcome each one individually at the start of each session and take great personal interest in their progress. All staff are involved in recording what children are achieving in all the approved areas of learning, and many instances of this were observed during the inspection.
31. The nursery has its own very good child protection policy, including procedures that are

implemented effectively and subject to regular review. The Head of Centre shares responsibility for child protection with the social worker attached to the Centre. All staff have received appropriate training.

32. The positive behaviour policy is a strength of the nursery. The policy is applied consistently but sensitively to meet the needs of these very young children and helps ensure a friendly, calm and orderly atmosphere. A good strategy is in place for modifying any inappropriate behaviour if it does arise. Although attendance at the nursery is not a statutory requirement, session records are kept carefully and the nursery follows up any prolonged absence. Parents are made aware of the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
33. Assessment procedures are good. There is a very comprehensive assessment and record-keeping file with very useful tracking sheets to help record the children's progress. These are linked comprehensively to the 'stepping-stones' leading to the achievement of the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage of learning. There is a clear assessment structure built into the planning; for example, two focused activities taken from the medium-term planning are assessed each week and other incidental observations of activities are used in part to help inform assessments. Regular meetings are held to discuss the observations made by the staff, and these are used effectively to plan future work or to ensure the early identification of problems or particular abilities.
34. Daily planning, for example, of the structured work in the 'Chicks and Hens Groups,' does not however, always support the ongoing assessment for different attaining groups of children sufficiently. The comprehensive assessment procedures form part of the information used in the entry and exit sheets of children and the accompanying booklets that contribute to the children's own Record of Achievement. However, assessments are not analysed sufficiently well to provide important information about the various levels of children's achievement, any potential differences between the achievements of boys and girls, or in relation to children's progress over time. In addition, teachers' planning does not always make it clear how the results of assessment are being used to decide what individual children need to learn next. A very pleasant occasion occurs at the time of transfer, when children 'graduate' in a special ceremony, attended by their parents and receive their completed Record of Achievement that reflects their life in nursery.
35. The nursery is kept very clean and the outside play area is maintained well. Health education is good. The school has adopted a formal health and safety policy, but this requires revision to ensure that it covers matters, such as those with specific responsibilities for safety, emergency procedures, and the identification and control of any possible health and safety risks more comprehensively. Provision for the children's general health and for any specialist requirements is very good. The nursery is able to draw on the excellent range of external support and caring agencies available more generally to the Centre if the need arises.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. The previous inspection reported that the partnership with parents was the cornerstone of the nursery's work. This is still the case. In some areas, steps have been taken to deepen the partnership; for example, by introducing induction training for the parent representatives on the Management Committee and by appointing a member of staff with specific responsibility for liaising with them. Overall, therefore, the nursery has very effective links with its parents. This is reflected in the very positive replies to the parents' questionnaire and their comments at the parents' meeting. They are very proud of the nursery and what it achieves. They are particularly pleased with the progress made by their children, the approachability of staff and how closely the nursery works with them.
37. The information provided to parents about the nursery and their children's progress in it is excellent. From the initial home visit onwards, staff work hard to maintain good means of informal contact and communication. Parents have their own noticeboard and a lively newsletter keeps them well-informed of events and developments. Open evenings are held each term, and regular

workshops on subjects such as mathematics, science and creative work are a prominent feature of the nursery's work. The reports given to parents on the progress of their children before they leave the nursery are clearly written and informative. In addition, the children's records are made accessible to parents.

38. The nursery is very effective in its partnership with parents of children who have special educational needs. A climate of trust is developed as soon as the children enter the nursery. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in the different stages of the special needs process and are kept fully informed of the children's progress. Learning targets are shared with all parents and a number support their children with them at home.
39. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the nursery and their general response is very good. There are parent representatives for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A room for parents has been provided which enables them to stay in the nursery if they wish, so as to meet other parents and keep involved in the activities of the nursery. Teachers are able to draw on the support and commitment of a number of parents to help in the classrooms with activities such as reading, craft and games. Many parents also indicate their commitment to their children's learning by showing an interest in what they are doing before the session starts or in what they have achieved when they collect them. It is easy for parents to borrow books and other resources that might help their children's learning at home. The Head of Centre has been successful in obtaining a grant to build up a library for parents on various aspects of pre-school education. Parents also participate effectively in the interview process for new staff.
40. The Head of Centre is determined to continue work in further developing the partnership with parents, and there is a very good system of evaluating the effectiveness of the present arrangements through questionnaires to parents, open evenings, and regular meetings with parents and their representatives.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The nursery is well led by the Head of Centre who is ably supported by her senior team of three teachers. The recent appointment of the new Deputy Head of Centre, a teacher of considerable experience in early years education, has helped to complement the Head's own social services background. Teamwork is the key to the Centre's management provision and includes invaluable contributions from family workers who are nursery nurses and bring their own strengths and interests to teaching and learning. There are, however, weaknesses within monitoring and evaluating aspects of nursery practice.
42. The nursery has clear aims that are reflected in its everyday practice, activities and procedures. It is part of the much larger Centre provision but is also pivotal to all that is planned there for Pre 5 children and their parents. The nursery, therefore, benefits from the close proximity of specialist support and advice, including health visitors, psychologists, social workers and speech therapists. A fundamental priority is the support given to children with special educational needs. The Autism Resource is a very good example of what can be achieved with the right level of support when it is both well-conceived and managed successfully. It also provides a very good example of educational inclusion whereby there is strong emphasis on equality of opportunity for all children to gain maximum benefit from their time there.
43. The senior team provide clear educational direction and this is reflected in the priorities for the nursery as expressed clearly on the Centre's development plan. Roles and responsibilities are well-established, but it is largely the co-operative teamwork that helps run the Centre so successfully on a daily basis. There is a shared commitment to improve the provision and to meet the targets set within the development plan. The latter is a useful working document and takes a realistic view regarding time-scales and responsibilities as to what can be achieved in any given year.
44. The nursery does not have a separate governing or management body to assist the Head of Centre in its everyday setting. Although this is likely to be the case for the foreseeable future, the

Centre is currently in the process of establishing a new Centre Management Committee that will involve representatives from education, social services, parents and others from the community, in a more robust and accountable form of management. This is important, as to date there has been too little monitoring of children's standards in the nursery, together with an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning that occurs. Although standards in these areas have not slipped in recent times, members of the Management Committee or Liaison Group have had little opportunity to develop their roles or help shape the direction taken by the nursery itself. There is also a limited understanding by them of the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision and how general standards in the nursery can be monitored, reviewed and improved as necessary.

45. The current senior team has taken appropriate action to help meet the nursery's targets for growth and future success. Staffing levels have been well maintained, and this represents a considerable strength of the nursery and the learning that occurs. The Centre's resources are very good and these are well managed and used effectively to extend children's learning and progress. Correct focus has also been given to improving those areas in need of attention following the previous inspection. The funding given to the Centre is considerable, and although much of this has to be distributed to other areas, such as Family Support, the nursery benefits from a modern suite of premises and an excellent adult/child ratio. Available finance, including specific grants, is well-targeted and the impact of spending in the nursery is monitored appropriately. Good attention is paid to the principles of best value to ensure that resources are used most effectively to meet the needs of the children.
46. The overall number of staff who work in the nursery is very good and clearly has a good impact on teaching and learning. Teachers and family workers blend together well and children receive close, individual attention. Family workers also help audit and resource major areas of the curriculum and go on courses to increase their own subject knowledge and improve experience. Each adult employed in the nursery also acts as a key worker to individual children, looking out for their particular needs from the initial home visit to the time children 'graduate' and move into reception classes. Parents rightly praise this highly supportive system.
47. The accommodation is good, despite being relatively small compared with the Centre as a whole. It is imaginatively laid out and well managed and supervised, with staff taking turns to monitor and prepare the various activity bases. The nursery is a bright and stimulating environment for learning where children's work is well displayed and there is much for the children themselves to see, handle and think about. Even more could be done to promote literacy and language, particularly to extend children's knowledge of the written word. Resources for learning are very good.
48. The management of children with special educational needs is very good, although the current co-ordinator has to rely on other colleagues as well as herself to ensure that all such children make good progress. There are currently too few planned opportunities for her to observe and monitor attainment and progress on a regular basis.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order to raise children's standards and to improve the level of nursery provision, the Management Committee, Head of Centre and staff should:
 - Extend the range of opportunities for children to practise and develop their skills of oral

communication. Ensure that children increase their confidence to speak fluently and to use oral language more imaginatively and accurately in a wide range of settings and for different purposes. (*paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 16, 22, 53 and 58*)

- Ensure that the information gained from the assessment of children's progress is used to:
 - plan tasks that build closely on what children know, understand and can do;
 - enable staff, as necessary, to group children so that they can work on some activities with others of similar attainment, maturity and speed of working. (*paragraph 34*)
- Extend the influence of the newly formed Management Committee, together with the Senior Team, to include greater responsibility to oversee the management of the nursery. Ensure that the standards attained by the children, together with the quality of teaching and learning, are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. (*paragraph 44*)

As well as the above issues, the Management Committee might like to include in its action plan the following areas for development:

- Ensure that the procedures for health and safety are expressed more clearly and fully in the revised policy currently under review. (*paragraph 35*)
- Review and adapt, as necessary, the procedures by which the appointed co-ordinator monitors the progress of all children with special educational needs, with particular reference to creating more time and opportunity for her to carry out her work. (*paragraphs 48 and 53*)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The Autism Resource

50. The recent provision of the Autism Resource as part of a range of comprehensive services provided by the Pre 5 centre has already had an effective impact on the lives of a small number of parents and children from across the local area. Two of the parents at the meeting before the inspection began spoke very positively about the Resource. They felt that their children were making good progress and were well-integrated into the full life of the nursery. They were particularly pleased with the regular information provided on the progress of their children. Even though most children are transported by taxi to the Resource each day, every effort is taken to ensure that parents and carers are kept fully informed about the daily progress made by their children. Home-school contact notes are used successfully to liaise with parents and support the children's development.
51. The adults in the unit work patiently and skilfully with the children. Teaching and learning is very good and activities are effective because they are at the appropriate level for each child's very specific needs. Tasks are made explicit by the use of picture boards to gain attention and to demarcate each activity occurring in the timetable. Short, purposeful routines are used to support a measure of communication and co-operation. Familiar routines reinforce basic concepts to keep the learning secure and enjoyable. The children respond very well as a result of the dedicated and hardworking staff, and the very good teamwork means that children benefit from inclusion in the main activities of the nursery. Knowledge of the children, flexibility and teamwork are the keys to the success of the Resource and this is also well reflected in the constant energy, compassion and skills of all the adults that the children come into contact with.
52. Observations and assessments of the children's progress are carefully recorded and used to plan the next steps of learning. Parents and carers are encouraged to work with the children on their targets and to attend meetings about aspects of their care. Individual Education Plans are reviewed regularly and links with a range of outside agencies provide effective support when necessary.

PART C: CENTRE DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed

28

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

12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	32	47	21	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on school's roll	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	25

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff	
Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	367875
Total expenditure	360324
Expenditure child	9009
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	7551

NOTE: the financial figures quoted here include the costings for the full centre. No figures relating to just the Nursery are currently available.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	13	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	40	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	27	13	0	43
The teaching is good.	73	27	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	40	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	13	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	37	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	83	17	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	37	7	0	17

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

53. The Centre's nursery provision is very good, overall, and provides well for children under five as they begin the new Foundation Stage. The nursery admits children over three terms, following at least their third birthday, and the average stay is between three to five terms before most transfer to neighbouring infant schools. The nursery has 78 children on roll, including six statemented children with autism who spend part of the time in the nursery and the balance in the Autism Resource, housed in an attached room. Children are assessed on entry to the nursery and results show that there is a wide range of attainment levels present. There are however, significant numbers with pre-school skills below the level anticipated for their age, particularly in relation to language and communication and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children with special educational needs other than autism are generally well-provided for and make mainly good progress set against their individual educational targets for learning. There are too few opportunities for the co-ordinator of special educational needs to monitor children's progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. The nursery centres much of its daily activity on children's personal development, and standards have remained at the sound level described during the last inspection. Teaching in this area is good, overall, and staff work well together to reinforce the children's personal development, including their confidence and self-esteem. The introduction of a key worker works well. A nominated adult visits children in their home, settles them into the nursery and monitors their subsequent progress. As a result, children feel secure, known and liked.
55. Children respond well to their learning and enjoy all that the nursery can offer them. Parents report that their children are very happy to come and relate well to adults and other children. Some are less confident in their relationships with other children and, initially at least, prefer to play in relative isolation, but in a positive and constructive way. Teachers try to involve all children in planned group activities and ensure that there is something available to interest all the children. They also stress the need for some independence and involve children in free choice and opportunities for clearing up after activities are over. Following a dance session, a group of eight children showed that they were able to put on their socks and shoes independently of adults.
56. Staff have high expectations of behaviour, and the nursery is generally a harmonious place with understanding and tolerance shown by most children. The children share equipment well and learn how to take turns. They show clear understanding about the need for only a few children to attend certain activity bays at any one time. When asked to work together, for example when constructing a large 'Humpty Dumpty', most children show that they can collaborate well. Listening skills are better than speaking skills and most children follow instructions satisfactorily and are proud if rather shy to show their work to others. Children concentrate well and are generally happy to persevere in one area at a time rather than moving unproductively between several activities. Teachers are keen for children to learn good manners and to know the difference between right and wrong. They promote these qualities through direct teaching and by being good role models themselves.
57. Many children find it difficult to talk freely about their feelings but given additional support, they clearly feel secure and enjoy their play. They show that they can treat living things with care and respect nursery resources at all times.

Communication, language and literacy

58. These areas of development are planned for satisfactorily, although there are too few structured opportunities for children to improve their oral communication skills. Teaching is generally good, with emphasis on story-telling and the introduction of letter sounds, rhymes and early attempts at writing. Children make a satisfactory start to their language and literacy skills and go on to achieve well as they move through nursery.
59. The speaking skills of many children are below the level anticipated for the age of the children. Speech is often very fragmented, with many children content to speak the minimum of words by way of answering. In some of their role-play, children's language is less than imaginative. The strongest area of spoken language is in the reciting of nursery rhymes, with most children showing good retention of words and most willing to offer rhymes without adult support.
60. Staff set up a reading area where children can hear stories read or have them re-told while using listening centres. The children know how to hold books, to turn the pages and know that pictures and print in books go from left to right. Most know that print conveys meaning. All children can readily identify their own names and there is a good system of registration that encourages children with their parents to pick up name cards and match them to a central sheet. They enjoy all aspects of language and a few are able to re-tell stories for themselves and get the sequence right.
61. Children are brought together in two groups at the beginning and end of each session and teachers give them a good range of language experience. They are asked to describe the weather before completing a weatherboard and are asked to sequence important events in their day. Teachers lay considerable emphasis on letter sounds and children are very confident in their recognition of letters like 'b' and can list and point out several objects beginning with this initial sound. The various parts of the nursery are clearly labelled, but more could be done to increase the amount of wording on display so that children are seeing new words and extending their vocabulary on a daily basis.
62. All children are taught the basics of writing single letters usually by copying them on to sand and then on to sheets. Teachers are careful to ensure that children begin and end letters in the correct way. These activities are well taught, with adults in close proximity and monitoring children's efforts at every stage. Although assessments are carried out on a regular basis, in this and other areas of learning, too little is done with the results to ensure progress in writing is ongoing and developmental.

Mathematical development

63. The programme for mathematics continues to be well resourced and organised as it was at time of the last inspection. As then, good quality resources are used to promote the early counting and sorting activities required of young children. Teachers use other areas of learning such as technology and creative development to introduce mathematical concepts. They are invited into the world of 'Sid Snail' and asked to count the number of snails they can see in the tank. Teachers encourage a lot of counting to twelve and sometimes beyond, but do not always match numerals to real objects to ensure that children understand the real value of different numerals. In more typical exercises, children are very successful when undertaking practical activities to underline their understanding of number values to five. A few higher attaining children understand 'one more' or 'one fewer' but this is not the norm.
64. During the inspection, the theme of clocks was fully underway and most children know that pointers tell different time stories and that they move 'clockwise' around the face. They point confidently to a seven or a three on the clock face and can talk about different types of clock or wristwatch. Many derive great fun and benefit from a large cardboard grandfather clock that has pride of place in one of the bays. A small room off the central area is set out with various number and other mathematical puzzles and activities, but this was somewhat under-used during the week of inspection. Where it has been taught well, children are told the day of the week and will

readily say what yesterday was and what tomorrow will be.

65. Most children understand that different shapes have a specific name and many use them with reasonable accuracy. Some of these are three-dimensional, based in construction areas, while others are sorting shapes, such as circles, hearts, stars and triangles. Many children are slow to pick up specific mathematical vocabulary and teachers' short-term planning is not always clear as to when and how such language will be taught and consolidated.
66. If accompanied by an adult, many children become readily involved in a wide range of mathematical games, including sorting and creating sets of objects using basic criteria such as colour and shape. Teachers are skilled at asking questions of the children at the right moment in order to extend their progress. When questioned, children generally knew which objects had made their way into the right or wrong set. All staff have a good awareness of the learning needs of young children and do their best to ensure that mathematical learning is securely based on practical activities and investigations. As in other areas of learning, there is very good support documentation giving excellent ideas for teachers, supported by a wide range of bright resources that children enjoy working with.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. This area of learning is taught particularly well as children frequently enter the nursery with limited knowledge of all but the things immediately around them. Much of the nursery is laid out very carefully and designed to challenge children's senses, inviting them to learn through careful observation and touching. More children make good progress in this area of learning than in any other because of the stimulating activities made available to them.
68. Children show a great deal of interest in living things, such as snails, and they learn much from watching small creatures hatch out or other living things within the nursery environment. They show much interest in their own nursery garden and sometimes are lucky enough to see grey squirrels foraging for food. They know creatures, plants and trees are pictured in books and can relate these accurately to each other. Their attempts at recording what they see are broadly at the level anticipated for their age.
69. Children are able to talk about weather changes, but their actual vocabulary is rather limited when they do. They learn well from handling a wide range of materials, such as pine-cones and different types of wood. During their current theme of 'clocks', children were fascinated by the wide range of clocks on show and played for lengthy periods in a make-believe workshop, mending watches and comparing clocks and watches, big and small. They develop an early impression of distance and location by helping successfully to compile a map that illustrates Goldilock's route to the Three Bears. Others are challenged to make a new chair for Baby Bear or a bowl of porridge for Daddy Bear. In this context, their efforts are in line with those expected for their age.
70. Staff are careful to extend the children's knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their own homes. Several visits are undertaken through which children learn about buildings and people that serve their community. They have visits from the police, and other caring organisations such as the Fire Service, and learn of their roles in protecting the public. Photographic evidence gives a strong indication of the sound quality of learning that occurs when the nursery visits well-known attractions such as Cannon Hall Farm and The Butterfly World near Leeds. Such visits help to establish something of their own cultures and traditions. Multicultural awareness is also well taught, and children know something about different religious festivals, such as Eid and Diwali. Some higher-attaining children are able to use artefacts and pictures, to illustrate their knowledge of the Chinese New Year.

Physical development

71. Children attain average standards in this area of learning and make good progress, overall. Staff use the available space and facilities well and particularly imaginative use is made of the outside areas. Teaching is well-planned to ensure that children enjoy a wide range of experiences which help develop their fine and gross motor skills.
72. As part of their fine motor control and general handling skills, children play with a variety of constructional apparatus and do well with model making such as constructing towers. They learn how to dismantle clocks and how to make star mobiles that involves them in cutting and sticking. Some children show adeptness and patience when weaving spiders' webs from wool and other materials. Children handle scissors and other small tools with the skill expected for their age. Teaching of such skills is good, with staff working very often with individual children.
73. The outside play area is very well thought out, and effective use is made of imaginative and creative opportunities. During the inspection period, the outside theme was garages, and simply-constructed but very realistic car washes and repair centres were created that fired the children's imaginations and produced some sound quality play and language. Outside play is an option for the children at almost any time and they are free to move in and out as they feel the need. The areas are well supervised and are generally a stimulating way to consolidate physical development. There is no central hall, such as found in a typical primary school, but there are several smaller rooms where children can be taken in small groups to practise movements and more energetic exercises. In one such area, a visiting adult taught dance to a very good level and the children's response bordered on excellent as they stretched and moved to pre-recorded music.

Creative development

74. Standards in this area of learning are broadly in line with that expected for the age of young children. This is an area that is both well-taught and resourced and most children make good progress in this aspect of their development.
75. Staff are keen to provide a rich variety of materials and experiences for all children and there is effective direct teaching of several techniques that help to fire the children's imagination and enthusiasm. Children help create a huge 'Humpty Dumpty' that sits proudly in the centre of the nursery. They also become involved successfully in smaller projects, such as making mice using collage techniques and weaving using wool and card. There are ample opportunities for children to explore the potential of different medium and they explore well in this respect. Nevertheless, there is more scope for teachers to allow children greater free choice of materials rather than provide the most suitable in a pre-set arrangement.
76. Considerable emphasis is placed on early painting techniques, including a rich variety of pre-mixed colours. Children's gallery portraits are at the level anticipated for their age. By way of contrast, staff provide only black and white to illustrate printing techniques and children's efforts are most attractive. A few children are able to say how their work has come about and even how it could vary next time. Sand and water trays are areas that are easily transformed by adding additional items that help create imaginative dimensions. Ice is added to water and children experiment with it as it melts. The wet sand tray is transformed into a pre-historic world by the addition of carved wood and rubber dinosaurs. Children play imaginatively in such a setting.
77. Most children show broadly average attainment in their observational drawings of clocks and other three-dimensional objects. They understand the basic shape but sometimes fail to create the extra fine detail on their finished drawings. Only a very limited amount of music-making occurred during the inspection period. Children were able to sing familiar rhymes and songs to the guitar and showed a satisfactory sense of rhythm and the ability to sing in tune alongside others.