

INSPECTION REPORT

HETTON LYONS NURSERY SCHOOL

Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton-le-Spring

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108750

Head teacher: Mrs Susan Carter

Reporting inspector: Mr Steve Bywater
18463

Dates of inspection: 5th and 6th March 2002

Inspection number: 230273

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Four Lane Ends Hetton-Le-Hole Houghton-le-Spring Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	DH5 0AH
Telephone number:	0191 553 6698
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Shirley Sharp
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18463	Steve Bywater	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it?
			Equal opportunities	The schools results and achievements.
			English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
12511	Linda Buller	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes and values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22062	Peter Graham	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hetton Lyons Nursery School serves the large former mining village of Hetton-le-Hole, on the edge of the City of Sunderland. The area is average in terms of its socio-economic circumstances. The school has 63 children. There are 36 boys and 27 girls. Most come for either a morning or an afternoon session; two children attend full-time and stay for a school meal. There are no children with a statement of special educational needs but 12 children are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is about average. The school has fewer children from ethnic minority groups than do most schools and all children speak English as their first language. There are a very small number of children from traveller families. When children start in nursery, skills and knowledge are usually at the level expected for most three year olds. At the time of the inspection, about a third of the children had only been in the school for around six weeks.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good nursery, which is rightly valued by its parents and provides an effective education for its children. Most children reach or exceed the standards that are expected for their age. The head teacher provides good leadership and clear direction to the work of the school. She is given good support from staff and governors. Teaching is good and the teachers work well with children to extend their learning. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- A significant number of children exceed the standards expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Teaching is good and children are helped to make good progress.
- Teachers provide a wide range of stimulating activities both inside and outside the classroom.
- The school is led well by the head teacher. She has good support from staff and governors.
- The staff use a good range of assessment strategies very well to check children's learning and plan the next steps.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school has strong links with parents and parents think highly of the school.

What could be improved

- The role of the governors needs to be clarified. They need training for their new responsibilities.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1998. It was given five issues to address and has dealt effectively with most of them. Assessments are now used in a more detailed way. Work is suitably challenging for higher attaining children. A good special educational needs policy and effective teachers' planning ensures children with special educational needs have work which is planned in clear, small steps. The school development plan is a satisfactory document which is more of a strategic document and covers a period of three years rather than just the current year in detail. The governing body are much more involved, but still not enough. They meet regularly as a full governing body and in committees but require further training to prepare them for their increasingly demanding roles. Spiritual development has improved and is now good with children enjoying their learning and finding excitement in the activities and their own discoveries.

STANDARDS

By the time they leave the nursery, a significant number of children are likely to achieve standards for their age that exceed those described in the early learning goals¹ of the foundation curriculum in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. In all other areas of learning most children are on target to meet the early learning goals. Children quickly take the first steps towards reading and writing. They have positive attitudes to books and enjoy the story sessions. The teachers and nursery nurses provide well-structured activities for children to develop writing skills. Staff carefully supervise children so that they learn to hold pencils correctly and form letter shapes carefully. Children count and work with number, measurements and shapes confidently as they work and play. Children work with curiosity and excitement as they take part in first hand experiences that encourage them to experiment and investigate the world around them. They use computers confidently. The provision in the nursery helps children to become confident learners and to enjoy their work reaching the standards expected in their personal and social, creative and physical development. Children work and play well together and all children, including those with special educational needs and those from traveller families do well. The nursery has worked hard to maintain and to improve the standards noted in the previous inspection and the good quality of the teaching has a positive impact on children's learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Some children had only been in school for around six weeks and along with those who had been in school for the previous term they were clearly settled, happy and enjoying their work and play.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Most of the time the children work and play together very well. There are odd occasions when some children do not want to share a toy or take turns but these incidents are soon forgotten.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. All staff have warm and caring relationships with the children and these help children to become confident learners. Children respond happily and sensibly to clear routines and these support children's personal development very well.
Attendance	Good. There are no national comparisons for nursery schools but the figures provided suggest that attendance is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Good

¹ Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

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.

Teaching is good overall; sometimes it is very good. The teamwork of the staff is a particularly strong feature of teaching. Staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum for young children and present it in a way that encourages the children to be active learners. The classroom and activities are very well organised so that all staff are clear about their different roles and responsibilities. Teachers choose and use resources well to capture and maintain children's interest. Teachers ensure that children know what they are expected to learn and why. All staff have very good relationships with children and they handle situations in a consistent way. Consequently, children feel very safe and secure. There is a good mixture of activities which cover all areas of learning equally well. Some of these are taught directly and those that children can choose for themselves are carefully structured so that children learn effectively. As a result, there is a busy but calm atmosphere in the nursery. Children are absorbed in their work and play.

Staff teach literacy and numeracy skills well in a way that is suitable for the children. Stories are read from 'big books', talk is encouraged through play and children learn to read and write their names and to experiment with writing in their play. Numbers are taught through rhymes and songs as well as through structured group activities. Children's learning is assessed very effectively so that staff can decide what children need to do next. This ensures that children make good progress.

Children with special educational needs are supported well, taking as much a part in the every day activities as is possible but with attention also to their special programmes and needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of good quality. It prepares children well for future work in the National Curriculum. There are particular strengths in the way that the school links areas of learning together in well-chosen, stimulating and purposeful activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers assess pupils' needs early and maintain accurate records carefully. Children are constantly helped to make the next steps in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All children speak English as their first language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. All aspects are covered well. The curriculum provides many thrilling first hand experiences which excite and interest the children. Social skills develop well as children work and play together. Children learn about other cultures as well as their own.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The nursery makes satisfactory provision for the health and safety of the children in its care. Some of the procedures such as the recording and reporting of accidents need to be more formal but there is a strong commitment to the well-being of the children. The school has good systems for assessing children's learning.

The school enjoys a good partnership with parents. All parents actively support the children's learning each week through the shared reading ("Talk-talk" packs) and book lending arrangements. Many parents are involved in the very popular 'Family Literacy' and 'Family Numeracy' courses and this provides extra support for their children. Other parents accompany the children on visits.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides good leadership and management which is based on a strong philosophy of education for young children. The staff share a sense of common purpose and are a well co-ordinated team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors are very supportive of their school but have no statutory powers. They are unclear about their roles but are keen to develop them. So far, they have received little guidance and support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Progress towards the meeting of targets set in the school development plan is monitored and evaluated at governors' meetings.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is well resourced. There are sufficient staff who work well together. The principles of best value are applied as well as they can be for a nursery school with limited control of the budget and no national comparisons to enable it to compare how well it is doing.

The school enjoys reasonable accommodation. Outside there is a very good, covered safe play surface and a grassed area. Imaginative use of the sloping site is being planned with shrubs and flower beds to enhance children's learning about the natural world.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and they make good progress. • The teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school works closely with parents. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	A small number do not feel well informed about how their children are doing.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. Children enjoy learning, work and play with interest, behave well and make good progress. Teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. Parents have plenty of information about the curriculum and their concerns are unfounded. The school has a notice board at the entrance which includes the current planning so that parents can read about what the children are doing. Regular newsletters and discussions supplement this. Parents have informative one-to-one meetings with staff before their children start at nursery and the staff are always available to talk informally about how well children are doing. There are good formal arrangements for three meetings a year and regular reports so that parents know what the next stages of their children's learning are.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 At the time of the inspection, around a third of the children were very young and had only been in school for a few weeks. Attainment for the end of nursery is judged on evidence from children's records and is supplemented by a judgement of how well the current children are on course to reach the stepping stones set for their age. Based on this, attainment is likely to be better than the national expectations described in the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world. In all the other areas of learning attainment is likely to be in line with the expectations. The nursery has worked hard to maintain and to improve the standards noted in the previous inspection.

2 Children develop confidence and skill in their speech. Four year olds talk confidently with each other and to adults, as do most of the new children. Some of the younger children are a little less confident and say little, preferring to make a gesture. Children enjoy stories, listen with good attention and can answer questions accurately about what happened. The staff draw children's attention to the sounds that letters make in many ways so that children learn to identify them. Children take the first steps towards reading and writing quite early, for example as they learn to read and write their names and some are writing simple words and phrases before they leave.

3 Children learn to count in play and formal activities. A few children count easily up to 20 and also show an awareness of numbers beyond that. Most children can count reliably to five. Children tackle simple mathematical problems and understand 'add' and 'take away'. They develop sound skills in measuring through play in sand and water as well as baking and shopping activities. As they play with the 'Three Bears' House, they recognise that some bowls are 'bigger' and others are 'smaller'. Most recognise repeating patterns and can sort toys into sets by shape, size and colour.

4 The activities that children are presented with motivate the children very effectively to find out more about the worlds they live in. They explore materials such as magnets and investigate the living world, looking at the flowers in the garden with interest, noting changes and then drawing what they have seen. Children are taught how to use tools and equipment safely and demonstrate good skills such as those they use when joining different materials together or using the mouse on the computer.

5 Creative skills are in line with those normally expected for children of this age. Children enjoy using a variety of materials such as paint, play dough and collage. They sing simple songs and rhythms remembering the words well. Children have good opportunities to use musical instruments and do so with satisfactory skills.

6 Children are encouraged to spend some time outside whatever the weather. A roof over the safe play surface means that they can enjoy regular access to climbing apparatus and a variety of other activities. There is a good range of apparatus including wheeled toys, some of which are used independently and others which are used in pairs. The good range of equipment supports children's physical development well and their skills are typical for their age whether they are using large equipment such as climbing frames or small tools such as scissors and gluesticks.

7 Children identified as having special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. They are encouraged to join in all of the activities. Because of the nature of

their difficulties, they often make quite small steps such as doing a task for a few minutes, but this can be a significant achievement. Their learning is carefully planned to help them to make good progress.

8 All children speak English as their first language. Traveller children are fully included in all activities and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Children's attitudes to nursery are very good and this remains one of the strengths of the school. Their positive attitudes enable them to make good progress in all the areas of learning. They willingly take part in all activities and are keen to have a go at new experiences such as designing and creating an obstacle course. When working or playing alone, children are able to concentrate for extended periods of time. For example when working on computers they understand what is required of them, are confident in operating the programme and know when they have been successful.

10 Developing high standards of behaviour and self-discipline is an integral part of children's personal development and as a result behaviour is very good. Children are aware of nursery rules and try hard to meet teachers' expectations of them. For example, during circle time they know that they must wait their turn to speak and listen carefully to the contributions of others. Very occasionally a small number of children have difficulty in taking turns. However, adults deal with these incidents quickly and fairly so that children are rarely unhappy. Children identified as having special educational needs behave well, enjoy nursery and are interested in the activities provided for them.

11 Children's personal development is very good. They take advantage of opportunities to develop their independence by making their own decisions about the activities that they want to try. At the end of each session they willingly take responsibility for cleaning up and putting equipment away. Children have a good understanding of what will make themselves or others happy or unhappy. For example, they talk knowledgeably about the people who care for them and what they can do to care for others. Children have very good relationships with adults in the nursery. They trust and like their teachers and nursery nurses; as a result they settle well into nursery routines and are developing high levels of self-confidence.

12 Children enjoy coming to nursery and this is demonstrated in their good levels of attendance. Most attend regularly and arrive on time. They happily leave their parents or carers and quickly become engrossed in the day's activities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13 Overall, teaching is good. Of the 12 lessons observed, a quarter were very good and the rest were good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a much stronger picture than at the previous inspection.

14 The teachers and nursery nurses have a good knowledge of the foundation curriculum and the early learning goals. This shows itself in the way the curriculum is planned and the room organised. As a result, the provision enables children to select their own activity and to learn independent of the adults. There is a standard structure to the day that gives children security because they know what will happen at different points of the session. There is a good balance between activities to which children are directed and those that they can choose.

15 Staff pay very careful attention to what they expect children to learn in each activity. These are displayed as simply as possible close by and guide the resources and learning. For example, only

objects of different sizes were in the sand tray because the intended learning was about size. Assessment of children's learning is a particular strength and the regular meetings at the ends of sessions are used to consider what has happened and what needs to happen next. A general strength of the teaching is that the team work extremely well together. The planning clearly identifies roles and responsibilities of all of the staff and all are aware of what is happening.

16 The relationships that the staff have with each other and with the children and their parents are very good and help the children to feel safe and secure. Children quickly build easy and trusting relationships. This shows in the role play when the nursery nurse and children make porridge in the 'Three Bears' House' and discuss which bowl of porridge is 'just right'. Teachers work hard to ensure that children get on well together and step in instantly when petty squabbles occur. For example, one of the children was determined to be 'Mummy Bear' at all cost was encouraged to share the role with another. Despite the child's protestations, she played a different character. Any aggressive incidents are dealt with firmly and as a result of the approach and consistency to behaviour from all of the staff, children behave well and older ones are aware of what is right and wrong in their independent play.

17 Although there is not a formal approach to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the staff have an awareness of the principles and, right from the start these are adapted to fit the needs of nursery children. The teaching of literacy is particularly strong. Teachers ensure that all strands of listening, speaking, reading and writing are covered at an appropriate level. They read stories from 'big books' for example, so that children get used to seeing this approach. They develop children's knowledge of letter sounds and names through stories. Teachers encourage children to begin to read their own and others' names as they find their own places from place names on a card. Staff develop number work and mathematical language well. They pay good attention to the needs of different groups of children. Staff ask more demanding questions of the older or more able children and are careful to stretch each according to their needs. As a result, as children leave the nursery some will be working within the first National Curriculum level for English and mathematics and almost all will have achieved the early learning goals. A good feature of teachers' planning is the use of links between all areas of learning. Pupils are given opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding, and to realise that learning is not an isolated experience.

18 Good teaching ensures that children identified as having special educational needs make good progress. These children benefit from early identification of their particular difficulties, suitable activities and good ongoing assessment of their progress towards the specific targets set for them. There is good liaison with parents and programmes are planned to meet particular needs but are closely linked to what is happening for the other children.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

19 The curriculum is planned to cover all of the areas of learning and the school offers all of its pupils, including those with special educational needs, a broad and balanced education that prepares them well for their move into the primary school. Detailed planning of activities and experiences ensures that all children have good opportunities to build on their previous learning. The wide range of interesting activities provided for the children promotes their enjoyment of learning and supports their progress. Sessions are well structured and the children quickly learn to follow the routines. Well planned adult-guided activities make a significant contribution to the development of children's knowledge, skills and understanding whilst their independence is developed through being able to choose which other activities they want to do.

20 The school makes good use of its own outdoor areas and local facilities such as the shops, open spaces and local library. The curriculum places a good emphasis on developing children's basic skills and there are many opportunities for the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of health issues. To support this the school is aiming to be recognised as a 'Health Promoting School'.

21 Staff take many opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development even though these opportunities are not always identified in the planning. The overall provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with very good provision for their moral and social development. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.

22 Children enjoy their learning and are often excited by the activities and their own discoveries. For example, one boy marvelled at the fact that his magnet attracted the metal objects on his tray. They have good opportunities to reflect and consider their own feelings and those of others. Children develop an appreciation of the wonder and beauty of the natural world through activities such as watching their pet fish and looking at flowers growing in spring, and they learn to respect living things. Children begin to recognise the value of other cultures and beliefs. They listen to a variety of music, including some from different cultures and good use is made of a range of musical instruments from different parts of the world. As a result of these kinds of experiences, children are learning from adults how to enjoy and to respect the world around them. They are learning about the need to be sensitive to other people and living things.

23 By having high expectations of behaviour, providing children with interesting and worthwhile activities and developing strong relationships with them, staff promote children's moral and social development very well. Children learn to work and play together happily and treat each other and adults with respect. Teachers and support staff set very good examples to the children. They show much courtesy towards the children and this encourages similar politeness and courtesy in return. Children develop a good understanding of right and wrong and the supportive and caring ethos within the school encourages strong relationships between the children and between children and adults. The strong emphasis placed upon children speaking within a group, such as at story time, helps them to develop confidence. Teachers promote this very well and they use praise particularly well when children develop their skills such as speaking in sentences within group situations.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

24 The procedures for ensuring children's health safety and welfare are satisfactory as they were at the time of the last inspection. Staff are aware of issues concerning health and safety and care for children well. However, some procedures such as the recording and reporting of accidents are informal and are in need of some improvement. Child protection is carried out in line with the recommendations of the area child protection committee and the local education authority. The head teacher is responsible for liaison with support agencies and all staff have undergone training making them aware of issues and child protection procedures.

25 There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, which are incorporated into the planning and assessment of children's personal development. Staff provide a secure, happy atmosphere for learning in which children learn to behave and develop self-esteem. Through praise and encouragement children are encouraged to exercise self-discipline and take responsibility for their actions.

26 Staff monitor children's attendance at nursery closely. If a child is absent without a reason having been given, this is first followed up by telephone and if necessary at the end of a week by

letter. If parents are having difficulties the nursery does all it can to help by being flexible about times and sometimes is able to offer the chance to change the session attended.

27 Procedures for assessing the personal and academic progress of children have improved significantly since the previous inspection and they are now good. The staff have a very good knowledge of each child's stage of development and they use this very effectively to plan activities that build upon their prior knowledge, skills and understanding. Staff carry out an initial assessment of each child by observing them at play soon after they arrive at the nursery. Constant observations of how the children are progressing are made and these are discussed at the frequent meetings of the teachers and support staff. The staff clearly know the children well and they have a good knowledge of individual children's strengths and weaknesses. This information is used very well to plan future activities. Arrangements for assessing and recording the progress of children with special educational needs are good. Children with specific needs are identified early and their progress towards the targets set for them is monitored closely.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

28 Parents have mainly positive views of the nursery. They are pleased that their children like nursery, that they are making good progress and that behaviour is good. Inspection findings support parents' positive views.

29 Some parents raised concerns regarding how well they are kept informed about their children's progress and how closely the nursery works with them. Parents' concerns are unfounded. Staff make every effort to get to know families and to create an environment where parents feel able to share information about their children. This enables staff to effectively meet the needs of each child. The quality of information provided to parents is good. The nursery keeps parents well informed about its daily routines through regular newsletters. These documents are well presented and are useful reminders of dates and events. Curriculum information is also good. The planning for each term is displayed in the entrance to the nursery and the weekly topics are further highlighted with an additional display. The nursery tries hard to meet the needs of working parents by each term providing a written report of children's progress together with the opportunity to discuss these at evening meetings. These reports are of good quality and inform parents what it is that their children know, understand and can do in each area of their learning.

30 Parents' contribution to the work of the nursery and to their children's education is good. All parent support their children's work at home through the use of "Talk, talk" bags. This is having a significant impact on the standards attained especially in children's literacy, numeracy and creative skills. The nursery in partnership with Sunderland College provides parents with a range of opportunities to attend courses to enhance both their own skills and to work alongside their children. A significant number of parents have responded to these opportunities. For example, during the week of inspection parents were discussing the use of mathematical language such as *over*, *under*, *below*, *above* and the activities parents could use in the development of their children's understanding. All of these activities result in an effective partnership between home and school to the benefit of children's learning.

31 A strong partnership exists between the parents of children identified as having special educational needs and their teachers. Parents are involved in the identification of children's difficulties, they are given good opportunities to support their children's development and they are very happy with the provision made for children with special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

32 The school is well led by the head teacher who has a strong philosophy for educating young children. The staff support her effectively and they form together a hard working and efficient team. Their shared commitment is very evident for example in the planning meetings that monitor the activities of the week and plan the following week's work.

33 Most of the issues from the previous inspection were followed through well, and the school development plan is now a useful longer term strategic document which sets out the school's work beyond the current year. It is, however, not a straight-jacket and is adapted to meet circumstances. For example, performance management strategies have already been included. Changes to the role of the governing body have been recognised and the plan will be adapted to include training for governors so that they are prepared for their new duties later this year. Governors are not yet fully involved in the development of the school improvement plan but they do monitor the progress being made in dealing with the priorities at governors' meetings.

34 The head teacher monitors teaching and learning informally since everyone works together in one room sharing responsibilities, and more formally when the school's adviser completes a review. Monitoring reports are shared so that everyone is aware of strengths and weaknesses. These are to be developed further with more attention to detail and a more formal recording and reporting by the head teacher as part of the performance management procedures.

35 The school has sufficient staff and accommodation for the numbers of children. The building is satisfactory and the combination of a covered safe play surface, hard play and garden areas is very good. These, together with good quality resources help to provide a good quality of education. Provision for children with special educational needs is managed well by the co-ordinator and head teacher. The school enjoys a strong relationship with external agencies and this supports well the progress of children with special educational needs.

36 The head teacher and governing body make sure that available funding is appropriately allocated in accordance with the educational priorities defined in the school development plan. Inevitably, most of the budget is given over to staffing and other essential items which are dealt with by the local education authority and not managed by the school. This will change in April when the school has control of its budget for the first time. Specific grants for staff and curriculum development, and to support children with special needs, is used properly. The school has sensibly retained a small contingency fund and plans to provide shower and disabled toilet facilities in the future when finances allow.

37 Because the governing body is restricted in its 'powers' it has not been as forward thinking and developmental as it could have been. The governors have not received specific training to prepare them for their roles as governors of a nursery school and admit that they would welcome guidance. Governors are clearly very loyal and supportive but are not focused sufficiently on their monitoring and evaluation roles. Whilst there is a clear commitment to providing a high quality provision, the school has yet to set in place the necessary strategies, routines and supporting documentation to ensure consistent improvement.

38 The head teacher has a satisfactory understanding of the principles of best value and these are applied as far as is possible for a nursery school, which has no access to comparative statistics either locally or nationally. Governors engage in serious discussion about educational developments before spending decisions are taken, there is an element of consultation with parents through occasional questionnaires and through informal discussion, and the purchase of supplies and services is always undertaken with a view to achieving best value for money.

39 Although financial management and routine financial control are sound, the school now needs to take action on some of the recommendations of the most recent audit report by ensuring that, from April, governors are more fully involved in the financial decision making. Given the standards achieved by children and the quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40 There is one issue that the school should address within its action plan.

The school should;

(i) improve the leadership and management by:

- increasing the oversight and participation of governors in key areas such as:
 - (a) the effectiveness of management;
 - (b) teacher performance;
 - (c) curriculum;
 - (d) development planning;
 - (e) budget making and the recommendations of the most recent school financial audit;
 - (f) the health and safety requirements;
 - (g) general compliance with statutory requirements.

(Paragraphs 33, 34, 36, 37)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

12

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
Number	0	3	9	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	75	0	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 six 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)	33
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

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	12

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/A*

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/A*

National comparative data	N/A*
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National comparative data	N/A*
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** Nursery schools do not have to provide data for comparative purposes*

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

The school does not have control of its own budget

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	63
Number of questionnaires returned	25

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	28	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	32	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	36	4	0	24
The teaching is good.	80	12	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	36	12	8	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	24	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	32	4	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	44	40	12	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	68	24	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	28	4	0	16
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	20	4	0	24

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 A significant number of children are on course to reach standards that are better than the levels described in the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. In all the other areas of learning attainment is likely to be in line with the expectations for their age. The overall good quality of the teaching has a positive impact on children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

42 Children's personal and social development is promoted very well. When they start nursery, almost all children have personal and social skills that are typical for children of their age. Through very good teaching that places a strong emphasis on this area of learning, teachers and support staff ensure that children make good progress. Careful planning of opportunities for children to develop personal and social skills, very strong relationships and skilful teaching in the nursery ensure that the children grow in confidence and maturity. Children come into the nursery happily and quickly settle to their play demonstrating good levels of confidence. They develop a good understanding of the school routines and they respond well to the structure provided for them. When choosing what activities they would like to do, the children are keen to try out new activities as well as those that they are familiar with. In group activities such as story time, they listen very carefully and follow instructions well.

43 All adults provide good role models for the children. They are very supportive and display a genuine warmth in all dealings with the children. Their cheerful and polite manner with children, parents and each other creates a positive ethos where children feel safe and secure. Children are expected to be polite and they are taught how to relate positively towards each other. Group times such as story time also help children to understand about taking turns as they answer questions and give their views. When choosing their activities at the beginning of sessions, they wait patiently and listen carefully to others until it is their turn. Children are given good encouragement to become independent. They show good levels of independence when going to the toilet, washing their hands afterwards and choosing whether to use paper towels or the hot air drier. The school promotes children's personal development very effectively by ensuring that equipment and resources are easily accessible so that children can be more independent. When doing messy activities such as playing in the water or with pastry, the children put on aprons without being prompted, and they return resources to the correct place when they have been finished. Good behaviour is promoted well and staff quickly deal with small disagreements. As a result there is a calm and busy working atmosphere in the nursery.

44 Through the nursery's regular invitations to people such as a dentist and the lollypop lady to visit, children develop social skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Communication, language and literacy

45 Teaching of language and literacy is good overall with some very good elements and children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Most children are likely to achieve the levels expected for their age and many exceed them.

46 Children talk confidently to each other as they set about their tasks. During group times such as story and focused activities, teachers and support staff place a strong emphasis on developing

children's communication skills. They encourage the children to speak clearly and in sentences and they make very good use of praise to encourage children in this respect. As a result, children make good progress. Most children speak clearly when asking questions or giving their opinions. They enjoy using language and confidently explore different sounds. When playing with the pastry, they delight in using words such as 'squidgy' and 'wiggly worms'. During group times, children become increasingly aware of how words are constructed and sounded out. Teachers use a good variety of techniques to develop children's clarity of speech and vocabulary. For example, by encouraging children to listen as the sound of the word is clapped out, the teacher helps them to understand the structure of the word. Children enjoy chatting to each other.

47 Children enjoy books. When choosing activities, the book area is popular and many children really enjoy sharing books with adults. As quickly as one book is finished, they will be ready with another. Children treat the books with respect, and they are cared for very well, even those with pop up features. They hold the books correctly, turn the pages carefully, and use the pictures to tell the story. Adults are skilful in reading stories and they capture the interest of the children. This promotes very well children's interest in books. The strong relationship developed between children and adults, along with these skills in story reading, has a significant impact on children's interest. With stories such as 'Snow White' and 'The Gingerbread Man', children enjoy the repeated sections and they join in the 'Mirror, mirror, on the wall...' and 'Run, run...' sections with great enthusiasm. Children maintain their attention during stories and sit very quietly. They talk confidently about the main characters and often re-tell the story in the correct sequence. Children take books home regularly to share with parents. By talking about books, adults introduce children to the different parts and children begin to develop an understanding of what is meant by terms such as 'title' and 'cover'. Almost all children are able to recognise their own name.

48 Children are encouraged to develop their writing skills in the office area where they write letters to members of their family or party invitations for their friends. These early attempts at written communication develop further as they begin to form recognisable letters. Approximately half of the children are able to write their names by copying the letters from a card and about one-sixth can write their names unaided.

Mathematical development

49 There is a wide range of attainment in mathematics which is overall in line with the learning goals for the children's ages but a significant number of the older children will exceed them. Initial assessments show that children's mathematical knowledge is in line with the levels expected for their age and subsequent assessments show that they make steady progress. Children's records and their work during the week of the inspection indicate that one or two children will have achieved the early learning goals for children who are a year older, some will have reached stepping stones that are greater than those for their age and, apart from those who have special educational needs, the rest will be in line with those stepping stones.

50 Children know and use some of the number names and enjoy joining in number rhymes and songs such as Five Current Buns in a Baker's Shop. They know the counting sequence to 5 and are beginning to count small numbers of objects accurately. The four year olds can count securely, for example, when they sort plastic animals by their shape, size and colour. Most children (around 70 per cent) confidently recognise the numbers one to five and can spot if the order is changed. A few (15 per cent) have above average knowledge of numbers and can count easily to 15. Above 20 they continue to count but without the same degree of accuracy. The higher attaining children can select correctly a number of objects and add on one more or one less.

51 Children understand mathematical language such as 'empty' and 'full' when they fill their containers with water and in their outside play children know they go 'under' a bar and 'over' a bridge. This is related well to their story of the Three Goats and the Troll. Children identify the common mathematical shapes including squares, rectangles, circles and triangles and choose their own shapes to make a collage of one of the Three Bears. Children can copy simple patterns that are made by their teachers using materials such as sequences of coloured cubes or patterns made up of horizontal and vertical lines.

52 By the time they leave the nursery, the most able four year olds are working within level 1 of the National Curriculum. For example, their work shows that they can recognise and write numbers to 10, draw a correct number of objects and undertake simple additions and subtractions in practical contexts.

53 Teaching in mathematics is good with both formal activities and incidental learning. The staff regularly give children opportunities to count when they are reading stories or through number rhymes and songs so that children gain confidence and learning without effort. Staff help children to see the mathematics around them for example, when jumping in and out of hoops, climbing over apparatus or through the tunnel. Activities such as sand and water are planned to extend mathematical concepts such as measurements. The equipment that is provided for these activities is carefully chosen to deliver the planning. For example, there was a focus on size in the sand tray and bowls and utensils of different sizes were provided in the role-play house so that children learn as they play even if there is no adult to support their learning. Where there is an adult in support, mathematical language such as full and empty, large and small is developed effectively.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well as a result of good teaching that builds effectively upon the basic knowledge that children have when they start the nursery. A good range of well planned, interesting activities enables the children to make good progress so that they are likely to exceed the early learning goals for knowledge and understanding of the world.

55 Adults support children well when investigating their surroundings and they encourage them to explore the world around them. Teachers' high expectations ensure that the tasks provided for the children are interesting and challenging. When using the computers, children use the tracker ball and mouse with confidence and accuracy. They use a paint program to make up funny face pictures, begin to use the keyboard to write their names on their pictures and then print them with help. Some children are able to print their work unaided. Children begin to develop an understanding of control technology through using a remote controlled vehicle. They become increasingly accurate in guiding the vehicle through each other's legs.

56 Carefully planned activities and skilful questioning by teachers and support staff, promotes well children's knowledge. They develop a good knowledge and understanding of magnets. Armed with a magnet each the children thoroughly enjoyed exploring the classroom for items that would 'stick' to their magnet. The teacher used questioning skills very well to help the children develop an understanding that some objects are attracted and some are not, and by the end of the activity, they were predicting with good accuracy which objects would be attracted to the magnet.

57 Good use is made of the immediate school environment and the areas surrounding the school. Children look at the flowers in the garden with interest, noting changes and then drawing what they

have seen. They develop their knowledge of their local environment through visiting local shops, open spaces and the library.

58 Opportunities for children to learn about living things are good. They plant cress seeds and watch them grow, using a magnifying glass to help their observations. They know that the seeds need water in order to grow and they enjoy watching the growth and comparing how different ones are doing.

59 Children often make foods with adult help and these activities provide good opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are encouraged to talk about what they are doing. When making porridge in the Three Bears' House, they identify that a cloth is needed to take the bowl from the microwave because the porridge is hot. They use language well to describe the changes they observe. For example, once cooked the porridge is 'sticky and hot'. When making cress sandwiches, they use their senses of sight and taste to describe their creations. Teachers are very careful to emphasis hygiene and safety and the need to have an adult to help them with such activities.

Physical development

60 The very good facilities outdoors are a factor in providing a good curriculum and ensuring that children develop their physical skills. Children have access to a good range of activities and go outside every day. Children show skills which are typical for their ages. They run, jump, climb and balance using a variety of apparatus. They ride bikes quite capably, although this would be better if they were provided with marked lines to help them to control direction. Whilst most of the equipment is for one child at once, some is for two, for example a trolley and a wheelbarrow, and the children co-operate well, happily accepting a passenger. Mostly they are aware of the needs of others in the spaces around them but occasionally they are so absorbed in what they are doing that little crashes do occur and adults have to help them to solve their little problems.

61 There are many opportunities for children to gain better control of fine movements through activities such as painting and drawing, joining construction toys, using scissors and staplers or making up jigsaw puzzles. They demonstrate increasing skill which shows in the sophistication of drawings of themselves or control of letter shapes.

Creative development

62 In their creative work, children are reaching standards that are in line with the stepping stones for their age. Children's work shows how their perception and drawing skills develop from simple outlines of people to more complex representations with details of facial features, hands and feet. They print with paint bubbles and fingers, and paint freely using powder or poster paint. They can name colours correctly. When they choose to paint, children collect their own resources and put their paintings on the side to dry by themselves. Some children mix their own colours whilst others are provided with ready mixed paints. During one activity, children were effectively encouraged to explore mixing paints to provide the closest match for their painting of crocus and daffodil flowers.

63 Some good music making was seen during the inspection. Many children enjoyed singing, playing instruments and listening to the music on the cassette player. They enjoyed jiggling around to a Strauss Polka, playing their percussion instruments along to the strong beat of Caribbean music and also listened to Vivaldi's Four Seasons. A positive feature of the teaching was the way that staff told the children about the music and this promotes their cultural development. Children were led well in singing songs with actions and overall, music was a strong area of provision at this time.

64 Children enjoy role-play in the Three Bears' House especially when they have an adult with them. Most talk freely and are clearly aware of the different characters such as Daddy Bear and Goldilocks. They play for quite long lengths of time in this area both by themselves and with others.