

INSPECTION REPORT

BEECHDALE NURSERY SCHOOL

Consett

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 113985

Head teacher: Mrs A Bell

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell
2456

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 3rd July 2001

Inspection number: 230283

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beechdale Road Consett County Durham
Postcode:	DH8 6AY
Telephone number:	01207 505752
Fax number:	01207 505752
Appropriate authority:	Durham Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Watson
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

OIN	Team members	
2456	J Bell	Registered inspector
11368	K Lee	Lay inspector
3277	L Hunter	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse (Education) Limited
14 Enterprise House
Kingsway
Team Valley
Gateshead
NE11 0SR

Tel: 0191 487 2333

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE.

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	9
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves its immediate area in the town of Consett in County Durham; it admits children from a relatively wide area, including the town and outlying districts. The nursery is set in a built up residential area. The local authority resources the nursery to admit children who are referred with special educational needs. There are currently 14 children on the school's register of special educational need. Of these, seven children have been referred to the school by the local authority. There are four children with a statement of specific need. The school roll has 81 children who attend the school part-time. Children are usually admitted in the year of their fourth birthday, although nine younger children were admitted this year and will spend an extra term in the nursery. The children transfer to a number of different primary schools at the start of the year of their fifth birthday. Most enter school each year with a broad range of prior attainment and previous experience. However, the current intake includes more children with standards in language, literacy and early number skills that are above those expected for their age. The children are all from white, English speaking families.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school; all staff provide a high level of care and support that enables the children to make a very good start to their education. The children learn through a rich and stimulating range of experiences that prepare them very well for their future work in the reception classes of their primary schools. The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes very good or excellent. This enables the children to make effective progress during their time in the nursery and by the time they transfer to their next school many achieve above the standards expected for their age in all the areas of learning, with about a third of the children who achieve more highly. The school provides very good support to children with special educational needs and they achieve well against the targets set for them. The children's personal and social development is excellent, and they are well settled in school. The head teacher leads the school very well, with good support from the staff and governors. All staff work as a close-knit team and the high quality of teamwork is a key to the very successful atmosphere for learning created in the nursery. Relationships are very good and staff are committed to improving the learning opportunities for all children. The school does not have a delegated budget; it receives annual funding from the local education authority to meet the cost of learning resources. These funds are well managed and decisions for spending are closely monitored to ensure that the school gets the best possible value for the children.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and managed.
- The high proportion of effective teaching promotes children's learning and attainment.
- The relationships in the school are very good; they promote very good attitudes and behaviour and support the children's personal and social development.
- The school provides a rich and exciting range of activities and experiences that ensure a high quality environment for learning.
- The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs.
- The school builds very good relationships with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- The opportunities for children to develop and practise their own writing skills, particularly the more able.
- Opportunities for children to be more involved in planning their activities at the start of each session and in evaluating and sharing what they have achieved.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There were no key issues in the report from the last inspection in December 1997. However, the school responded well and has made very good progress in dealing with the issues raised within the body of the report. It has built on the good practice identified and has continued to improve its effective provision for children's early learning. Standards have improved and more children are attaining above what could be expected by the time they leave the nursery. Teachers have improved their planning for outdoor play and the area has been developed well to provide good opportunities for imaginative play, with a good range of activities to support physical development and to stimulate learning. Staff ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to investigate and play together, and independently. The daily programme has been reviewed and this ensures that there is regular, direct adult involvement in all activities and this has a positive impact on children's learning. The staff have analysed the curriculum in response to national guidance and modified it accordingly. There are improved toilet and shower facilities for disabled children. In the past year the school has successfully attained its 'Investors in People' award, gained an excellence award and attained the national 'Basic Skills Quality Mark'. The school is well placed to continue its planned improvements.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the national early learning goals by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:		Key
Communication, language and literature	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematical development	B	
Personal, social and emotional development	A	
other areas of the curriculum	B	

Many of the four year olds in the nursery are likely to achieve standards above those identified for their age within all the areas of learning by the time they transfer to their reception classes. About a third of the children do very well in early language, literacy and number work. However, more able children could attain higher standards in their early writing. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent and they are confident and well settled in school. They make good progress in their learning and achieve above expectations in their creative work, particularly in drawing and painting. Many children have good physical skills for their age. They have a good understanding of the world about them and many develop a very good understanding of early scientific concepts through the varied range of practical activities planned for them. Staff set realistic targets to help children to achieve well and these enable many to make good progress. Children with special educational needs are very well supported by all staff and make very good progress in relation to the targets set for them. These are often linked to improving their concentration, physical and social skills or developing their speaking, listening and early reading skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The staff manage children very well and so behaviour is very good; in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Children's personal development is excellent. They work well together and relationships with adults are very good.
Attendance	Although attendance is not statutory, children like coming to school and parents ensure that they attend well.

The children enjoy the stimulating range of experiences that are provided to support their learning. They move confidently around the nursery, both inside and outdoors and take out and return equipment sensibly. The children share toys and resources and learn to take turns. The high quality of relationships and high expectations of the staff reinforce the children's personal and social development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. It was good in 65 per cent of the 17 lessons seen, with 18 per cent of lessons where it was very good or excellent. It was satisfactory in the other 17 per cent. This high proportion of good and very good teaching enables children to learn effectively and to make good progress during their time in the nursery. Staff plan well together and have a very good understanding of the learning needs of young children. They work hard to develop the children's language and literacy skills in all the activities. Speaking and listening skills are taught well. However, the teachers' planning does not enable all children to be sufficiently involved in making decisions about what they are going to do and to share and evaluate what they have achieved by the end of the session. Although the teaching of literacy skills is good and children learn well, more opportunities could be given for children to develop and practise their independent writing skills. Staff help children to be confident in early number and mathematics is taught effectively. All staff promote well the children's personal and social development; this encourages them to become confident learners and ensures that they build good relationships with each other. Those with special educational needs are particularly well supported by staff and integrated well into school routines. The very effective teaching by specialist nursery nurses ensures that these children make good and often very good progress against their specific learning targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Provision is very good. The curriculum is planned and organised well to include a rich and interesting range of experiences and activities suitable for children of nursery school age. The good range of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good and enables these children to make good and sometimes very good progress in relation to the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for children's personal development is very good. Provision for children's spiritual development is good and it is very good for their moral social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good care and support for all its children. The procedures for the assessment and recording of children's progress and behaviour are mainly good. However, recording procedures could be improved to make them more manageable and of greater use in planning children's tasks.

Relationships between staff and parents are very good. The school works effectively in partnership with parents and provides high quality information that ensures that they are kept informed about the progress made by their children. Parents value the work of the school and support it well. The school provides effective first-hand experiences within all the areas of learning; these successfully underpin the children's future learning and prepares them well for transition to the reception classes in their next school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher leads the school very well. She is well supported by staff and governors. All staff work well together and the high quality teamwork is a strength of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and are very supportive of the school. Parent governors are regularly involved in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed good systems to identify what it does well and where it needs to improve. There are effective procedures to check on the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	All resources are used well to support the children's learning. Although it has no devolved budget, staff and governors ensure that the funding identified for to the school is used well to ensure best possible value for the children.

The day-to-day management of the school is very good and staff provide a very effective atmosphere for learning. The head teacher has a very good understanding of early childhood education and gives a

clear direction for developing the work of the nursery. She balances well her full-time teaching commitment with her management role.

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 like school and behaviour is good. • The school is well managed and teaching is good. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • The school provides an interesting range of activities beyond lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work for children to do at home. • Information about their children's progress.

Inspectors agree with all the positive comments of parents but disagree with the criticisms. The school provides a range of pre-reading activities to enable parents to support children at home; this is similar to other nurseries. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through regular meetings, a written report and a shared record of their child's achievement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is very well led and managed.

1 The head teacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the staff and governors. She has very good relationships with staff and this ensures that they work as a close-knit team. This high quality teamwork ensures that the aims and values of the school are shared in order to provide an excellent ethos for learning. Although the head teacher has a full time teaching commitment she balances this well with her management role. Her own very high standards in teaching provide excellent models for other staff. The head teacher has a very good understanding of the learning needs of children under five. This enables her to give a very good direction that ensures the curriculum and organisation provide the best possible experiences for all the children in the school. She works well with staff, governors, parents and the community for the benefit of the children. These good relationships benefit the children through the good enrichment of the curriculum. For example, in the recent topic on buildings, a building firm brought a JCB digger into the school grounds and children's well produced drawings, paintings and models show how much they gained from these first-hand experiences. A recent initiative to improve the outdoor facilities of the nursery has effectively involved all parents, governors and members of the wider community. The school now has its own area in which children are growing a variety of vegetables and even some strawberries. This enables children to make careful observations of how things grow and they take a full part in caring for the plants during their daily outdoor sessions. They handle plants very tenderly and know that they need sun and water to help them grow. The children are now keen to market this well cared for produce!

2 The head teacher works well with staff to promote the children's learning and support their achievement. As a result staff are committed to improving the learning opportunities for all children and value their success. Parents, staff and governors are proud of their school and the school rightly has a very good reputation within the local and wider community. It is always over subscribed. The head teacher has worked well to promote the school's success and it has gained an excellence award and attained the national 'Basic Skills Quality Mark'. The head teacher supports well the professional development of all staff and this has been recognised in the school's 'Investors in People' award. The governors are very supportive of the school; they are well informed and are closely involved with the school through work in classrooms or the environment of the school. Parent governors are involved in the day-to-day events in school and use their expertise well in supporting the children's work both in classroom and in the outdoor area.

The high proportion of effective teaching promotes children's learning and attainment.

3 The quality of teaching was good and sometimes very good or excellent in almost all the lessons seen. This high quality teaching ensures that the children have a very good start to their education and are well prepared for work in the reception classes when they transfer to their next schools. Many attain above the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning with about a third who reach standards well above those expected for their age. The nursery nurses are well deployed and take a full role in the effective teaching and learning with groups and individuals. All staff have a good understanding of the learning needs of young children. They work well together to plan and provide a wide range of activities that enable the children to investigate and learn through exciting first-hand experiences. These provide a secure foundation for future work in all areas of learning. An excellent story session prepared the children well for future work in literacy as the teacher read the story 'Mouse Look Out' using soft toys to show the characters in the story. Her effective, dramatic reading made the very best use of the rich language of the story. The story was beautifully read and the children were totally enthralled. The teacher used a second reading of the story to enable children to look at the

illustrations and to talk about the story. The teacher used very good questioning skills and involved all the children in the discussion to reinforce effectively their speaking skills and vocabulary. In response to her question 'Do you think anyone lives in this house?' One child volunteered 'No, it has got no roof and the door is broken'. Another suggested 'Perhaps there's a ghost in there, look at the cobwebs'. The teacher's love of literature and enthusiasm were transmitted well to the children and they eagerly responded with well thought through observations and imaginative ideas.

4 Staff plan carefully together and ensure that the activities interest and involve the children, whatever their level of maturity or ability. They give a high priority to developing the children's personal and social skills so that they can work and play well together. Language skills are reinforced through all activities and role-play areas are used imaginatively to promote speaking and listening and to develop the children's understanding of their world. However, the teachers' planning for the 'circle' time at the start of lessons does not enable all children to be sufficiently involved in making decisions about what they are going to do. There are too few opportunities for all children to be regularly involved and to share and evaluate what they have achieved by the end of the session.

5 There is a good balance between direct teaching, and opportunities for children to work in groups, and individually. Staff ensure that children learn through well-planned practical experiences. For example, in mathematics activity the teacher worked with small groups of children to develop their measuring and recording skills. She gave very clear instructions so that children knew what they were to do and the brisk pace to the lessons ensured that they remained interested and fully involved. The children achieved well as they used string to measure straight distances in the outdoor area. By the end of the session they successfully measured from the washing pole to the edge of the sandpit, checked the measure with a metre stick and recorded their measurements with tally marks. The work provided a good foundation on which to develop children's understanding of standard measures. This good practical work is typical of much of the programme in this area of learning and enables staff to reinforce mathematical language linked to different topics such as length, shape and volume. This ensures that many of the children attain standards above those expected for their age, with about a third who attain standards well above those expected by the time they transfer to the reception year.

6 All staff are very aware of individual children and ensure that they all have access to the same opportunities and experiences. Teachers are very enthusiastic; they enjoy teaching and this motivates the children well. They make good links with the world beyond school and build on the children's own experiences. For example, in outdoor play the children used large construction equipment to make a boat and the teacher asked 'Is it a motor boat or rowing boat?'. The child replied 'We don't need oars, it's got an engine on the back'. Staff often link activities in the different areas of learning and so reinforce well children's language and understanding. As part of their physical development lesson, the teacher's calm and quiet approach meant children talked about their movement and then used them to act out the construction of a wall. This linked well to their topic on 'building' and children had a good recall of terms such as 'foundation' and 'spirit level' and showed in their role-play their understanding of digging a hole, mixing cement and laying bricks.

7 Staff provide very good care and support for the children and use praise effectively to enhance their self-esteem. They persuade less confident children to try new activities and to make choices of materials to create their own models. This guidance is provided very sensitively so that children of all abilities can achieve success and take pride in what they make. The relationships between staff and children are very good and are a key to the excellent personal and social development of the children. The staff know the children well and provide good support to those who are less confident or find it difficult to join in. All staff monitor activities carefully and assess children's progress. The information is recorded and used to plan work that matches the children's needs. However, the recording systems are time consuming and do not always provide a sufficiently clear picture to enable staff to extend some activities such as independent writing to provide increasing

challenge for the more able.

The relationships in the school are very good and promote very good attitudes and behaviour and support children's personal and social development.

8 The relationships between staff are very good and they provide effective role models on which children can base their own relationships with others. As a result, the children relate very well to the staff and other adults in the nursery. Their personal and social development is excellent and this has been maintained since the last inspection. Staff work well to enable children to gain confidence and promote their self-esteem. The high quality of support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is a key feature in their successful learning. The children are well settled in the nursery and move very confidently in the class base and outdoor areas. Staff work well together to reinforce the children's personal and social development within all activities. For example, children using the wheeled toys in the outdoor area occasionally squabble and want to be 'first' but staff quickly defuse the situation and children learn to take turns and share. When working on the large climbing equipment the more confident children help others who are nervous.

9 The staff provide a very good range of activities and experiences and this ensures that children develop very good attitudes to their learning. Parents are delighted that their children are eager to come to school and respond with such enjoyment to their tasks. Most children concentrate well on their work and maintain their interest. Those with special educational needs often have limited concentration but are encouraged by staff to persevere. The specialist staff plan for a range of activities that are well matched to the needs of these children and ensure that they have a number of shorter tasks that enable the children to achieve and so raise their self-esteem. For example once a lotto game was completed the children were quickly involved in a singing game. They shared great enjoyment and laughed with delight as they tried to respond to the actions as the song got faster.

10 The children are managed very well and their behaviour is very good, both in class and in the outdoor area. The very experienced staff quickly resolve any petty squabbles and children are so interested in the range of opportunities that they forget any differences. A few children with special educational needs have behavioural problems. The specialist staff manage these children well and are quick to intervene and encourage the children with a different activity or an opportunity to sit and talk quietly with an adult. The staff encourage children to work together and plan activities that will promote learning to share and take turns. They praise children's achievement and build their confidence in trying new experiences. Children develop their independence through opportunities to choose activities and to take responsibility for getting out and returning equipment.

The school provides a rich and exciting range of activities and experiences that ensure a high quality environment for learning.

11 The staff have reviewed their planning of the curriculum to take account of the national guidance for early learning. They ensure that the curriculum provides children with a rich and varied range of activities and learning experiences. The staff use the limited space well to provide tasks related to all the areas of learning. These are organised and resourced well to enable children to develop skills and understanding to underpin their future learning in all subjects of the curriculum. The outdoor area is now attractive and stimulating and has been extended and refurbished to encourage adventurous play and to enable children to grow plants, explore and experiment using sand and water and to play imaginatively with wheeled toys and construction equipment. Teachers provide good support as children climb, swing and slide in the adventure area. This enables children to develop their co-ordination and they show good control as they swing from one area to another and land sensibly. The children have access to computers to support activities such as matching, counting and making pictures. They know how to use the mouse to move objects on screen and one child showed very good control as

he used the mouse to pick up shapes and move them onto the template of a house. There are good learning opportunities for children's mathematical development and they learn through a good range of games that support early number skills or reinforce their understanding of shapes. Sand and water play support their understanding of volume and capacity as they measure with different shapes and sizes of container.

12 Language skills are reinforced effectively through all activities and role-play areas are used imaginatively to promote speaking and listening and to develop the children's understanding of the world about them. As part of the theme 'buildings' staff created an imaginative 'builders' merchants' in the role-play area, with real materials such as nails, tools and wood. This then became a 'building site' and children were fully involved as building workers, office staff and customers. One boy looked at pictures of new houses and decided he wanted one with 'two doors and two garages'. The adult in the role-play area interacted well with the children to lead a very lively conversation between 'builder' and 'customer' to decide how many rooms were needed and how many bricks should be ordered. The 'site manager' spent a lot of time on the computer and answering the 'telephone'. All inspectors visiting the area were required to wear a 'hard hat'. The topics are brought alive by worthwhile visits out of school and the use of visitors to school who share their experience and expertise. As part of the topic on 'people who help us' the staff had invited people from the public services such as police, ambulance and fire services to visit the school. The fire service brought a fire engine and photographs and books made by the children show the depth of learning from these opportunities. The children become totally involved and learn a great deal about the world around them through the staff's imaginative development of role-play.

13 The school ensures that children make a good start in their early reading. Staff share books with the children and encourage them to look at pictures and to identify and name characters in the stories. Children enjoy a wide range of stories and rhymes with adults and visitors in the nursery. They enjoy making their own books and teachers write down or word process what children want to say about their pictures for example, this process resulted in a colourful book about the sea, following a trip to the Sea Life Centre. Teachers are enthusiastic about books and share their enjoyment with the children and this promotes effectively the children's interest and they are eager to take books home each week to share with their families. They listen well to stories and follow them through looking at the pictures and talking about the events and characters. They know how to use books and that some books can be used to find information, for example they look in builders' catalogues to find different equipment. Children learn to recognise their names from their name cards and use these to 'register' their arrival in school.

14 Children have good opportunities for independent mark making in their role-play area as they make lists or take messages and 'orders' for new houses. Teachers carefully seek children's comment to write dictated captions to pictures. Many of the children write their own names and a few copy the teacher's writing to produce their own sentences. There are some opportunities for children to try to write their own sentences but these are too few although some use recognisable letters and words within their role-play and are ready to try to write independently.

15 The provision for children's creative development is good, with opportunities for imaginative music making. As a result children have a good sense of rhythm and can clap quite sophisticated patterns. They are introduced to a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes and know many of these by heart. They enjoy singing and using percussion instruments. In an effective lesson they learned how to hit notes in sequence to create a musical scale. Children develop their painting and printing skills and use colour and materials well to create collages. They created patterns with a choice of two shapes and colours and could accurately repeat the pattern. Staff provide good opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills through sticking, cutting and in shaping 'play dough'. The children learned about food technology as they prepared ingredients and made sandwiches for the 'building

workers'. They showed secure manipulative skills as they spread butter and different fillings, and then cut their sandwiches into quarters. The children were very proud of their expertise and one boy, when asked if he wanted another child to help him peel his hard boiled egg replied 'No, I'll peel my own egg, but thank you for asking me'.

The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs.

16 The nursery is resourced to admit children with special educational needs and has two extra nursery nurses to support these children, plus another who works part-time to support a child with a statement of specific need. These staff show great commitment and all staff in the school ensure that these children are very well supported and they are encouraged to take a full part in all activities, whatever their level of ability. For example, staff encourage less confident children to 'have a go' in physical activities. Other children in the class often help those who are less confident, or have physical difficulties. Children with special educational needs are fully integrated into the class and work well in group activities or when working in groups or individually with adults. Their learning is carefully monitored and, where a child requires direct teaching or support, this is managed well by the staff. For example, when one statemented child was very unsettled, did not persevere with any activity, and became boisterous, the nursery nurse distracted his attention and resolved the situation well by encouraging him to feed the fish. She knows the child very well and is aware that this is an activity that he enjoys. In outdoor play, the nursery nurse showed great understanding as she taught a child to observe carefully as he checked to see how much higher the carrots had grown.

17 The children's learning is well supported through carefully drawn up individual plans that identify targets and indicate what they should be taught. These plans are often linked to providing support for the children's early reading and writing or their personal and social skills. Individual targets are reviewed regularly to take account of the changing needs of the children and are shared with parents so that they can support the children at home. Many of the children attached to the school are from beyond the school's immediate area and the staff make good use of a home/school diary to keep parents informed of what has happened each day and how they can support their child's learning. Parents value this communication with the school.

18 These children enjoy their learning and they achieve success through tasks that are well matched to what they already know and can do. In the school's weekly language group, the nursery nurse supported the group well. Her good rapport with the children ensured that they were comfortable with the activity. They made good progress in their learning as they looked at pictures and clapped out the syllables of the name of the objects. The children enjoyed the activity and eagerly clapped the rhythm of 'dinosaur' but had more difficulty with 'binoculars'. They successfully created new words by matching two pictures such as a 'star' and a 'fish' to make 'starfish'. They were encouraged to listen carefully and to pronounce words correctly. In another session, the nursery nurse used a quiet room to enable children to feel at ease and to ensure that they could listen carefully without distractions as they played a lotto game to reinforce their language skills. She effectively supported a child with very little speech as he learned the names of parts of the body.

19 The school has developed good links with outside specialist agencies such as speech therapists, educational psychologists and physiotherapists. The good provision ensures that resources are well managed and the children make good and often very good progress.

The school builds very good relationships with parents and the community.

20 The school has developed very good links with parents and the local community. This has a very positive impact on the children's learning since parents support their children at home. The links with the community mean that many of the real-life topics through which the children learn are well

resourced, for example, materials for the 'building site' and the visit of a JCB digger. These links with the community enable the children to relate to the world beyond their immediate environment. The school has a good reputation and is highly regarded in the area. The children have sung for senior citizens and there are good links with the on-site junior school where the nursery children have regular access to the school hall for their 'Top Start' physical education programme.

21 Parents help in the classroom and support groups of children in activities. These include role-play, creating 'food' with play dough, helping children to complete jigsaws and in playing language and number games. Others work well with children in the outdoor area; parents and grandparents have helped to create the garden area and work with the children to care for the vegetables they have planted. When children celebrate birthdays their parents are invited to a 'party' in the nursery. This opportunity to share in their child's celebration is valued and enjoyed by parents.

22 The school liaises well with parents. They are kept well informed about their children's progress through regular consultation meetings with staff and an annual written report. The school also produces a booklet for each child that shows what has been achieved over the year. This is given to parents when the child transfers to a new school. Staff are available at the start and end of each day if parents have any concerns. Parents and childminders can find out about the topics that the children are working on from a notice board in the porch. The school's prospectus is attractive, with illustrations by the children. It provides useful information about the school and is supplemented by booklets on how parents can help their children at home. These links with parents and the community play an important part in the children's learning and in developing their awareness of the world about them and their place within it.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision of opportunities for children to develop and practise their own writing skills.

23 The children are beginning to act as 'writers' and make attempts at their own writing, with a few children who include recognisable letters and words when taking 'telephone' messages or 'writing' lists in the office on the 'building site'. The school's assessment on entry shows that a group of more able children had good early writing skills when they joined the nursery. However, these skills have not been developed sufficiently and although these children, and others, form letters well when copying adults' script, they are not provided with sufficient opportunities to attempt to write their own captions or stories. In a few sessions, however, children are given opportunities for purposeful writing activities with staff. For example, children dictate to teachers their captions for pictures or to tell a story and then write over or copy the teachers' script. For example, they displayed photographs of the houses where each child lives and carefully wrote down the child's ideas. The children volunteered thoughts such as 'I like my bedroom but I don't like the sound of the alarm'. One decided he did not like the carpet 'It is too pink'. Most children copy their name accurately and many write their name independently. Many of the children show good control of pens and pencils for their age, but have too few spontaneous opportunities to practise their independent writing. For example, children drew pictures of models they had made but did not have the opportunity to write about them.

Opportunities for children to be more involved in planning their activities at the start of each session and in evaluating and sharing what they have achieved.

24 The school provides a good start to each session by organising the children in two groups, each with an adult for 'circle time'. During this session they outline the range of activities, identifying those that will be led by an adult and others that children can choose. These sessions give a quiet start to the day and children settle well. However, many of the children are capable of taking a greater part in planning what they intend to do but there are few opportunities for them to do so. In a few activities

there are opportunities for children to record what they have done by, for example, ticking a picture of a 'smiling' or 'frowning' face to show what they have enjoyed. In areas where staff work with children they record which children have been involved. However, by their third term in the nursery many children are ready to plan what they intend to do and to record in simple ways the areas they have worked in. The current 'sharing' times at the end of each session enable teachers, and the groups they have worked with, to talk about what they have learned. For example, after making sandwiches the children described the process and talked about their choices of fillings and why they had wrapped the sandwiches in foil. Most had a sound recall of what they had done and others listened well. However, many children had achieved well in other activities but had few opportunities to share this with others. There were no opportunities for children to link what they had chosen to do at the start of the session with a chance to tell the rest of the group what they had achieved. This is a missed opportunity to develop the children's confidence in talking about their ideas and in making choices.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

25 In order to further improve the high quality of education provided in the nursery the head teacher, staff and governors should:

1. Provide more opportunities for children to develop and practise their own independent writing skills, particularly the more able. (Paragraph 23)
2. Improve teachers' planning for the start and end of each session to provide more opportunities for children to plan what they intend to do and then to evaluate and share what they have achieved. (Paragraph 24)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	5

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	12	69	12	-	-	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40.5
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

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

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	NA

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	NA

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

The school does not have a delegated budget. The local education authority manages the finances of the school.

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	16	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	83	16	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	83	17	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	67	25	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	93	7	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	81	16	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	93	6	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	27	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	83	14	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	96	4	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	88	10	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	92	8	0	0	0

NOTE

The three parents who disagreed that the 'school expects my child to work hard and achieve his/her best' disagreed with the wording of the questionnaire. They feel the school 'encourages' rather than 'expects' children to do their best.