

INSPECTION REPORT

ELLERGREEN EARLY YEARS CENTRE

Norris Green

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104506

Headteacher: Mrs H. Carless

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes
16249

Dates of inspection: 6th - 7th November 2001

Inspection number: 230307

Full 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 children:	3-4
Gender of children:	mixed
School address:	Ellergreen Road Norris Green Liverpool
Postcode:	L11 2RY
Telephone number:	0151233 4594
Fax number:	0151233 4594
Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S. Restorick
Date of previous inspection:	02/03/1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16249	Mrs S. M. Barnes	Registered inspector	Foundation stage, equal opportunities, special educational needs, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements, teaching and learning, leadership and management, improvement.
01305	Dr B. Rance	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its children, Partnership with parents.
4099	Mr R. Braithwaite	Team inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development, How good are curricular and other opportunities.

The inspection contractor was:

Evenlode Associates Ltd
6 Abbey Close
Alcester
Warwickshire
B49 5QW

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	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Children's 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	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and children's achievements	
Children's attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO CHILDREN?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ellergreen Early Years Centre is a community nursery school, for boys and girls aged from three to five. There are currently 63 children on roll who attend the school part time in either a morning or an afternoon session. The school occupies rooms in the local Community Centre, which also contains a crèche and out of school club, and is organised into two classes in the mornings and one in the afternoon. At the time of the previous inspection the school was housed in an old building, with its own garden and outdoor equipment, in a neighbouring street. Lunches are not served and consequently there are no statistics to indicate how many children would be eligible for free school meals. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, the area has a generally low level of employment. Most of the children live close to the school, and the great majority are of white ethnic origin. Only two children currently speak English as an additional language. There are eight children on the school's register of special educational needs two of whom have special needs of a more extreme nature. Most of these children have been referred due to speech and language difficulties. Attainment on entry covers a range of abilities but is well below average overall. This represents a change since the previous inspection when standards of attainment on entry were judged to be below expectations for children of three.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are very good and as a consequence teaching and learning are good, the quality and range of learning opportunities are very good and children of all levels of prior attainment, and from all groups, make good progress overall in all aspects of the foundation curriculum. The school ensures that children are treated with respect for their differing needs and provides equality of opportunity to all. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall. All of the teaching observed was at least good and often it is very good. As a consequence children make good progress in their learning in all areas of the foundation curriculum.
- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are very good.
- The school provides a rich and interesting curriculum, which covers all of the required areas and enhances opportunities for children to learn about the world in which they live.
- Behaviour is very good. Children have good attitudes to school and relationships within the school are good.
- There is good provision for care, welfare and child protection, and aspects of this are very good.
- The provision for children's spiritual and cultural development is good. Provision for moral and social development is very good.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and strongly approve of the work it does.

What could be improved

- There is little provision for the development of skills of climbing, balancing and swinging to develop strong bodies and opportunities to dance and move are restricted to days when the weather is dry.
- Performance management systems are not yet fully in place.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. The school is already aware of the need to improve these areas and they form part of the current school development plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1998 and has made good improvement since that time. Long and medium term lesson planning have been improved and the children's work is effectively planned in line with the foundation curriculum for nursery children. Assessment procedures are now good and there is systematic identification of standards, information from which is well used to set appropriate targets for children's further learning. Assessment is used well when planning lessons and this is now one of the real strengths of the teaching. The school development plan is effective and well written. It establishes clear

criteria by which the school can measure its success. The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements. In addition the quality of teaching has been raised and whilst it is still good overall, all of the teaching observed during the current inspection was at least good, and often very good. Arrangements for child protection, which were judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, are now very good. The school no longer has access to climbing equipment for its children and as a consequence standards in this area are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection. The provision for the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of the children is significantly improved from the overall good standards noted at the time of the previous inspection and is now very good overall.

STANDARDS

Children start in the nursery aged three and while there are differing levels of individual attainment, standards overall are well below expectations. In particular they are well below expected standards in the development of communication, language and literacy. During their time in the school children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make at least good progress overall across the areas of education for the foundation stage. In communication, language and literacy they make good progress overall and very good progress in developing vocabulary and language skills. In mathematical development, creative development, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world progress is always at least good and children are in line to very nearly attain the standards expected of children aged four when they leave the nursery. The progress children make in the creative aspect of the curriculum is very good and they attain standards in line with those expected by the time they leave the school. In physical development children's standards are below expectations when they start school, they make good progress in using their hands for careful work and manipulating small equipment such as scissors and beads and also in using their bodies with control such as riding tricycles and manoeuvring around the play areas. However the development of skills of climbing and balancing and in dance and gymnastics are inhibited by lack of equipment and an indoor space to work in when the weather is wet. The higher than average standards noted in this aspect at the time of the previous inspection have not been maintained.

CHILDRENS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children's attitudes to the school are good overall, they settle quickly to their daily routines, and enjoy their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children's behaviour is very good throughout the school. They are willing, and respectful of each other and adults.
Personal development and relationships	There are good levels of personal development and children act responsibly and with good initiative when opportunities are given. There are very good relationships between children and the adults who care for them.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Children are generally in school in time for the start of each session.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children in:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers and nursery nurses work together very well. Teaching effectively meets the needs of children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups and they make good progress in their learning. All of the teaching observed was at least good. A third of the teaching observed was very good. This was particularly the case in sessions to develop communication, language and literacy skills and creative development. As a result of the good and often very good teaching in these sessions, children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make progress in their learning which is at least good and often very good. This is an overall improvement in the

quality of teaching since the previous inspection when, although it was judged to be good overall, nearly a fifth of the teaching at that time was just satisfactory. The teaching of mathematical skills, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development are all good overall. The teaching of children with special educational needs and potentially higher attaining children is good and they make good progress towards their learning goals.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities for all children are very good. The curriculum is balanced, with sufficient emphasis on language development.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The provision for children with special needs is good and they make good progress towards their learning targets.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	There is appropriate support for children with English as an additional language, and they integrate successfully into the nursery and make good progress in their learning.
Provision for children's personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is a strength of the school. Very good opportunities are provided for children's social and moral development and there are good opportunities for spiritual and cultural development. This provision is reflected in the very good behaviour and relationships in the school. Provision for all children to take part in all activities is very good.
How well the school cares for its children	Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting children's academic performance are good and have improved, and assessment is now used effectively to identify children's needs. Procedures for child protection and for monitoring attendance are good.

Parents have very positive views of the school and strongly support the work it does. The school works hard to provide a welcoming atmosphere and good information for parents. Parents and carers are encouraged to participate in trips and to share books at home with their children, which they do willingly. However, very few parents help out in school in lessons.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher and key staff are very good. This reflects the parents' views of the school, which are that it is very well run.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are effective in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and all requirements are fully met. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when there were some minor areas that did not meet requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance and taking effective action is good overall. Although government deadlines for nursery schools have been met, performance management systems are not yet fully in place. The establishment of formal monitoring systems for teaching and learning forms part of the current development plan.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of all the resources it has, including specific grants and other funding. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum. Resources are good and the accommodation is appropriate. Financial management is good and the principles of best value are effectively applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents are uniformly positive that children enjoy school and that teaching and learning, behaviour and progress are all good.• They feel that the school is well led and managed and say they would be comfortable to approach staff with questions or a problem.• They feel that school plays an important part in helping children to become mature and responsible.• They feel that the school works closely with parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant areas identified for improvement.

The inspection team agree with the many positive points raised by parents and carers. Children are happy to come to school and are given many good opportunities to become mature and responsible. The school is very well led and managed, and teaching and learning are good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

1. Standards are overall well below those normally attained on entry to the school. This represents a change since the previous inspection when they were judged to be below average overall, and reflects the higher than average proportion of children attending the school who have speech and language difficulties. During their time in the school children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make at least good progress overall across the areas of education for the Foundation Stage. The good progress noted at the time of the previous inspection has been effectively maintained in most aspects of learning. In communication, language and literacy they make good progress overall and very good progress in developing vocabulary and language skills. The good progress noted at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Standards are still below expectations overall in this aspect of learning by the time they leave, although some children do attain the expected standards in the acquisition of skills which will help them to learn to read and write when they are ready. In mathematical development and personal and social development progress is always at least good and children are in line to very nearly attain the standards expected of children aged four when they leave the nursery. This represents a slight decline in standards attained overall and reflects the different standards of attainment on entry, and also the effect of progress being held back due to language difficulties in a significant proportion of the children. The progress children make in the creative aspect of the curriculum is very good and they attain standards in line with those expected by the time they leave the school. At the time of the previous inspection the attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world was judged to be in line to be above average by the time the children were five. Despite making continued good progress in their learning, in this area standards are slightly below average by the time children leave the nursery. In aspects of physical development children's standards are below average on entry to the school. They make good progress in such activities as manipulating small equipment such as scissors and beads, and also in such activities as riding tricycles and manoeuvring around the play areas. However the development of skills of climbing and balancing and dance and gymnastics are inhibited by the current lack of equipment and an indoor space to work in, in inclement weather. As a result standards are as expected by the time they leave, and the above average standards noted at the time of the previous inspection are no longer attained. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards their learning targets and attain appropriate standards in relation to their prior attainment. Children with English as an additional language are effectively supported and make good progress in line with their peers.

Children's attitudes, values and personal development

2. The previous inspection described the attitudes of the children as good, and they displayed high standards of good behaviour. This high standard has been improved still further and currently, while the attitudes of the children from all groups remain good, their behaviour is very good.
3. The children enjoy coming to school, although a small number take a little time to settle after leaving their parents and carers. Their very good interest and involvement in all that is going on starts as soon as they arrive at school. They are quickly involved in well-organised and resourced activities, which continue throughout the school day. Children listen carefully to their teachers and nursery nurses, and follow instructions carefully. The adults give them many opportunities to choose their activities and work independently, which the children soon get used to. Their behaviour is very good in this guided environment; they move about the classrooms quietly, play and learn with each other happily, rapidly demonstrating that they understand the ideas of sharing and respecting each other.

4. In many activities, such as the use of the tricycles, bikes and trolleys, eating Indian snacks or porridge, and experimenting with water, children show patience and care for each other. Their teachers trust in them working independently also helps their language development as they learn to co-operate with each other.
5. During the inspection, there was no evidence of bullying or racism, and children are developing knowledge of their actions on others, for example boys having a slight “push and shove” argument were very rapidly reported to their teachers by a girl in their group. Relationships generally between the children are good, and their relationships with the adults who teach and care for them are very good. From the youngest onwards, they are given responsibilities such as taking the registers to the office, “tidying up” and “putting away”, and chances to use their own initiatives in their work and play to develop their own learning. The school has, over time, effectively maintained the good standards of its children’s attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
6. Children’s attendance at the centre is satisfactory. Even though attendance for children of this age is not compulsory, school registers are used in the normal way and registration is formally taken at each session. Attendance statistics are not calculated and there are, of course, no national comparators. However, scrutiny of the registers shows that once children have started attending the centre the majority attend regularly. In view of the very young age of the children, and the difficulties that some parents have in getting all their children to their various other schools on time, the centre has an appropriately flexible attitude towards punctuality by calling the register some time after the official session start time.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

7. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All of the teaching observed was at least good and often it was very good. A third of the teaching observed was very good. This is particularly the case in sessions to develop communication, language and literacy skills and creative development. In these sessions children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make progress in their learning which is at least good and often very good due to the good and often very good teaching. This represents an overall improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when, although it was judged to be good overall, nearly a fifth of the teaching was just satisfactory.
8. Teachers and support staff work together very effectively as a team. All staff have very good knowledge and understanding of the areas they teach, and of the needs of young children. Sessions are very well planned to take good consideration of the foundation curriculum for young children, taking into account what they have already been taught, and building on it further. Teachers make good use of effective systems of assessment in their planning. They match work effectively to children’s needs and ensure lessons are suitably challenging for potentially higher attaining children and also suitably supportive of those with special educational needs, or those with English as an additional language. As a result, children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make at least good progress in all aspects of the foundation curriculum for children of that age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection that judged that potentially higher attaining children were not always sufficiently considered in lesson planning.
9. Teachers make good use of an appropriate range of teaching techniques and arrangements, such as group work and individual support, to ensure that children make good progress and achieve as well as they can. Support staff are well informed and effectively deployed and make a very positive contribution to the high standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. Communication, language and literacy skills are very well taught overall and children make overall good and often very good progress in their learning as a result. Particular emphasis is put upon the development of language throughout the school and all staff work consistently towards developing early language and the skills which will help children learn to read and write when they are ready to good effect. Good opportunities are taken to reinforce learning, such as the careful

questioning to remind children what they already knew, and reinforcement of vocabulary in a session making porridge linked to language work on “Goldilocks and The Three Bears”. Numeracy skills are taught well, suitable opportunities are provided by teachers for children to regularly practise to chant numbers, to count and classify and, as a result, they make good progress in their learning of mathematical vocabulary and counting. Teaching of all other areas of the curriculum is good overall, although the lack of provision for children to climb, balance and swing or of a secure area for dance inhibits the teaching, and therefore the progress children make in these aspects of their learning.

10. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support children’s learning. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when information technology equipment was unreliable and consequently could not be used effectively to support children’s learning in all areas of the curriculum.
11. Teachers all have appropriately high expectations of children’s behaviour and potential achievement. Lessons are orderly and relationships are good. Teachers’ management of children’s behaviour is very good and as a result the children make very good progress in their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. This high standard has been effectively maintained since the previous inspection, which also noted that the good management of children and their behaviour contributed substantially to the high standards of good behaviour and the resulting positive learning environment.

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

12. Curriculum provision and the range of learning opportunities in the school are very good. The relevant foundation curriculum for very young children, based on the early learning goals, is well planned and delivered and covers all areas of learning appropriately. At the time of the previous inspection the curriculum was judged to be broad, balanced and met the requirements of all areas of the national guidance document.
13. The curriculum now includes the regular use of computers by children, which was an area that was judged to require improvement at the time of the previous inspection. All children, whether full or part time, respond very positively to their learning environment and the support that they receive, and as a consequence make good progress.
14. There is very good breadth and balance in the curriculum, which is particularly relevant to the needs of the children. They enter the school with language skills well below those expected nationally, and the school ensures that in teaching of all six areas of the curriculum, continuing emphasis is placed upon improving children’s speaking and listening skills especially, as these are seen to be the key to their whole learning. As a good and effective curriculum is wholly in place there are no areas of weakness in curriculum coverage, except aspects of physical development owing to the limitations of the accommodation. Similarly the curriculum and provision for children with special educational needs are good, which is reflected in the good quality of their individual educational plans. The school makes effective use of specialist provision when developing teaching programmes. It provides equality of access for all and the head teacher is careful to monitor planning and delivery to ensure that there is equality of access in both classes. Children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups are appropriately included in all aspects of the school day. There is appropriate support for children with English as an additional language, and they integrate successfully into the nursery and make good progress in their learning.
15. Personal, social and emotional education is appropriately taught through all aspects of daily life in the school. Children from all groups are continually learning to mix successfully with their peers, develop their curiosity and independence, and play safely and harmoniously. This part of their

education is closely linked to the development of their own literacy skills. It is encouraged from the moment they arrive at school and are invited with their parents or carers to choose their daily “library” book. Many children show avid interest in their ‘big book’ sessions, which are giving them an early appreciation of words and stories. They also have frequent opportunities to develop their numeracy skills, often on a one-to-one basis, because of the wide range of abilities and existing knowledge, through practical activities with shapes, paints and beads. Counting is encouraged whenever possible in all areas of the curriculum.

16. The contribution from the community and other institutions to the life of the school is very good, and has improved since the time of the last inspection. The Early Years Centre shares new premises with the Community Centre which runs a very wide range of adult (further education) courses, and includes a café which is open to parents, staff and visitors, as well as a crèche facility and an after-school club. Nearby, on the same site, there is a sports centre and shortly a new medical centre will be opening. On two afternoons each week the school runs a parent and toddler group for children who have not yet reached the age of three. In all these various ways and aspects the school is seen to be an integral part of the larger community complex and this has a positive effect on children’s learning.
17. The school makes satisfactory provision for other curricular activities with periodic visits to local parks, the ‘Blue Planet’, and walks to the local shopping area. At some time during the year the children in the school are visited by the police, the fire brigade and the lollipop person. They also enjoy trips out to a number of places of interest and visit an old peoples’ home at Christmas. These are all helpful in broadening the children’s knowledge and understanding of the world.
18. The school’s provision for the spiritual, moral and social development is very good overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be good overall. Provision for children’s spiritual development is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Although there is no specific policy to create opportunities for children to reflect and wonder, teachers and support staff find frequent opportunities in lessons to promote these moments. There were good examples where children were looking at the beautiful clothes worn for Diwali, and their teacher showed them a bejewelled slipper she had worn as a very young child; and when a small group of children were making porridge after their story of Goldilocks, and watched open-mouthed as the ingredients were mixed together and changed texture. Children are encouraged to experience and talk about their daily lives, especially during extended registrations, and to look at new life and growth on their frequent visits to local parks.
19. The provision for both social and moral development is very good. At the time of the previous inspection both of these areas were judged to be good. The children learn from three years old what is right and wrong, and what is expected of them in school. All staff consistently encourage children to be proud of their achievements and to appreciate those of their friends. They also talk quietly to children if they transgress, helping them to understand their responsibilities without drawing undue attention to them. Children learn to look after their classrooms, their resources and each other and have very good role-models throughout the school. Social inclusion is a strength of the school, as for example those children with communication difficulties who are gently led and cajoled into improving their listening and speaking skills. In both classes children work happily together in small and large groups, and also feel secure enough to choose their own activities and work on their own if necessary. They are all keen to help in the many little jobs entrusted to them, and learn to take responsibility for their own needs such as visiting the toilet, getting ready to go outside and asking for food and drink when necessary. Boys and girls are treated equally on all occasions.
20. Provision for cultural development is good and the good standard has been maintained since the previous inspection. Many different cultural and religious festivals are all enjoyed by the children, such as Chinese New Year, Christmas and Diwali. Teachers provide considerable opportunities

for children to study the relevant clothes, art and music at these times. Children enjoy practical activities related to these festivals, which gives them a greater understanding of the life and religions of other cultures. Teachers take every opportunity to pass on their own knowledge and understanding of the world and its different cultures to the children in order to enhance their knowledge and learning. For example, when one teacher recently visited Japan she brought back pictures and artefacts to share, all of which has a positive impact on enriching the curriculum, and developing the children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

21. The procedures for ensuring children's welfare, health and safety are good, and aspects of care are very good and have improved since the previous inspection. The school provides a caring environment, where the teachers, nursery nurses and other support staff know the children very well. There is a formal and up-to-date health and safety policy specific to the school, which is effectively used. Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area and assist in regular risk assessments of the premises. Checks on fire alarms and potentially dangerous equipment are carried out regularly. Practice evacuations of the premises take place at least once each term and their success is recorded carefully. The procedures for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents are well established, particularly in ensuring that parents and carers are aware of any minor accident their child may have been involved in whilst at school. Child protection is good, and procedures are fully in place with the headteacher undertaking the role of designated person and all the other staff aware of their responsibilities in this regard.
22. The procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are good. They are appropriate for these very young children, recognising that attendance at school is not yet compulsory. Nevertheless parents co-operate fully with the centre by notifying the reasons for any child's absence.
23. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, as well as dealing with oppressive behaviour, are very good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. There is a published behaviour policy, which is well written and which is implemented sensitively and consistently by the staff in a positive and encouraging way, with little recourse to any kind of discipline or sanction. From their very positive comments, parents recognise and appreciate this aspect of their children's experience at the school.
24. The school provides good support and guidance for all children, which helps their progress towards the early learning goals of the foundation stage of their education. All the staff know the children very well and accordingly the procedures for monitoring and supporting their personal development are good.
25. The previous inspection indicated that the school needed to improve assessment procedures. This has been achieved and the school has in place a much more detailed system of identification and recording to monitor the learning and developmental needs of the children. There is continuous, on-going daily assessment and recording, both written and verbal, by support staff and teachers. This information is then used effectively in planning lessons and group work to support all children. It provides clear identification of how and where they can make future progress.
26. The school uses a detailed "Foundation Stage Assessment Record" for each child, which indicates the early learning goals of the curriculum and the "stepping stones" to achievement. Recording of progress is made regularly by a coloured marker system and space is set aside for significant observations and also comments from home, which staff use when planning to match the needs of individual children. Although these records have not been in place for long, they are already having a beneficial effect on learning.
27. Helpful portfolios of work are also kept for individual children, which are carefully annotated by staff, indicating age, progress and sometimes the "stepping-stone", which has been achieved. The assessments include the monitoring of children's social skills, and their attitudes and behaviour. This is useful to compare with the assessments made on entry to the school, especially in terms of their personal development. Parents are pleased with the information on their child's progress they receive from school, and how they also can help their child's learning.
28. The school has improved its identification and assessment of children with special educational needs. There are several children on the special needs register, the majority being for language

development. These have been identified at an early age and have effective individual education plans in place. These assessments guide good provision, as for example, the small groups who receive extra individual language tuition in a room especially identified for the purpose.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

29. Parents think very highly of the school. This has improved since the time of the previous inspection which judged the school's partnership with parents to be effective and developing. In the parents meeting, the questionnaire, discussions as parents collected or left their children or meeting parents in the community centre (café), there was very little criticism and whole-hearted support for the work of the school. Parents appreciate the caring ethos of the school and the standards of behaviour and discipline that their children acquire, as well as their progress in learning. Parents feel welcome and able to approach the staff or head teacher at any time.
30. Overall the information provided by the school to parents is good. The general information provided through newsletters and meeting the staff on a daily basis is very good. At the end of the year parents have a meeting with teachers to go through their child's record of achievement, and they are invited to make a written response. In order to help parents in supporting their child's education, the school runs a number of courses such as 'parents in education' and family literacy.
31. Parents' and carers' involvement in the life and work of the school is satisfactory. They take advantage of the opportunity to borrow books from the library to read with their children at home, and remain in class at the start of each session until their children are fully settled. Presently there are no parents staying in the school to assist the staff on a voluntary basis. However they do accompany children on trips to places of interest, such as the "Blue Planet" exhibition.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

32. The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher and key staff are very good. This reflects the parents' views of the school, which are that it is very well run. The strong effective leadership by the head teacher noted at the time of the previous report has been at least maintained. Under her guidance, there has been a good level of improvement in systems for planning and assessment and in the establishment of clear criteria for areas of improvement in the school development plan. This development plan is clearly written and targets appropriate areas for development. The school's aims and values are appropriate and known to all. Children's progress is tracked effectively, and realistic and very appropriate targets have been set for improvement. All staff work very effectively as a team towards the realisation of these aims.
33. Staff with management responsibilities make a good contribution to the work of the school and there is an appropriate level of delegation of organisational and management tasks. There is a good level of commitment to improvement by all staff and this is having a positive effect on school development and the raising of standards. As a result the school provides very effectively for children of all levels of attainment and from all groups.
34. The body that has ultimate responsibility for the school, is the local education authority, and governors' powers are limited. However, governors are effective in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and all requirements are fully met. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when there were some minor areas that did not meet requirements. The governors have an appropriate role in shaping the direction of the school. They do not have total control of finances, but maintain a keen interest in the development of the school and visit it regularly to update themselves with its' work and monitor progress. They have a good level of understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There are appropriate committees for various aspects of school management and governors' meetings are regular and well attended. Termly risk assessment is undertaken and the continued development of the role of

the governors appropriately forms part of the whole school development plan. However the local education authority is responsible for the safety and security of the children.

35. There has been suitable development of performance management, to ensure that teachers have good professional development, and appropriate steps have been taken to establish systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, in line with the government recommendations for the deadlines for nursery schools. The management of the school has not been involved in the appraisal of teachers for some time although professional development of staff has been in place, guided by the priorities of the school development plan. Performance management targets have yet to be put in place and implemented although a draft performance management policy has been prepared. The school is aware that these areas, together with a coherent policy to monitor teaching and learning, need agreement as soon as possible, in order that the school's standards can be maintained. The head teacher monitors planning effectively to ensure that there is equality of provision in both classes. As yet monitoring of teaching and learning has been largely informal, however the school has plans to continue to develop this in the current year. Induction procedures for new staff are good and the school provides an effective environment for the training of new teachers and support staff. The newly qualified teacher at present in the school has been effectively mentored and supported by the head teacher and other staff, and has a clear and detailed programme of training and self-review, which is working successfully. The school also offers work experience placements to secondary school children, placements for students on initial teacher training and on courses leading to a diploma in nursing care.
36. The school only has a very small budget to purchase consumables, which it uses mainly for purchasing learning resources, identified by the development plan, such as computer equipment. These finances are managed very well on a day-to-day basis by the headteacher, who advises the finance committee of the governing body well. The headteacher keeps a very close eye on expenditure, and materials and resources are carefully monitored. The school has used its allocated money well for its priority of improving the use of new technology. In both classes, computer and tape recorders (for stories and music) are used regularly by the children to improve their learning. The school's use of other specified grants, for instance for training and for small schools, is appropriate and effective.
37. The match and provision of teachers and support staff to curriculum needs is very good and this has a positive effect upon standards. The school at present has a good ratio of competent teachers for its children on roll, and a well trained team of nursery nurses and support assistants, who work very effectively with the children. The learning resources the school provides are also of good quality, appropriate and well used.
38. The school's classroom accommodation is good, and attractively presented by staff. The school lacks though, an area where all the children can come together to enjoy a whole school sense of community; to learn to dance, move and use large climbing equipment; and especially, to celebrate achievement together with their parents and staff on a regular basis. Likewise the playground area, although safe and of good quality construction, does not contain the resources and equipment for developing upper body strength and mobility and balancing skills noted at the time of the previous inspection.
39. The school provides a good standard of education for the children and so they make good progress. In the light of the good use that the school makes of all its resources, based on sound analysis of the best value that can be obtained, and taking into account the very good leadership and good financial management, the school clearly provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards and the quality of education provided by the school even further, the governors and staff should:-

- (1) Seek ways to improve provision for the development of children's bodily strength and balancing skills, and opportunities to dance and move to music on days when the weather is inclement.
(Paragraph No. 1. 9. 38. 57. 59. 60)

- (2) Continue to work to put performance management systems in place, in line with government guidelines for nursery schools.
(Paragraph No. 35)
(Both of these are already highlighted for action in the school development plan.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	10	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	66	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 children

Children on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	31.5
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	8

English as an additional language

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

Child mobility in the last school year

	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A

Attendance

Attendance is satisfactory.

There are no national comparisons for attendance in nursery schools.

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of children per qualified teacher	9
Total number of education support staff	3.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115
Number of children per FTE adult	4.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	0.5

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	38

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.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	32	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	49	5	5	3
The teaching is good.	84	16	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	37	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	39	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	84	23	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	26	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	28	3	0	3

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

40. Children attend the school on a part-time basis, either morning or afternoon, from the September of the academic year in which they are three until they transfer to a reception class in one of the local primary schools at the age of four. They are taught in two classes during the morning and one during the afternoon. Children enter school with differing levels of attainment, but standards are well below those expected of children of that age overall. This represents a change since the previous inspection when standards were below average on entry.
41. The teachers work closely with the well qualified and experienced support staff to provide a friendly and effective learning environment for children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups. Teaching is good overall. It is particularly successful in the teaching of early skills which will help the children to learn to read and write when they are ready and in the development of language. Planning is effective and thorough and is based effectively on the appropriate foundation curriculum for young children and also on careful and accurate assessment and monitoring of progress of each child. Support staff all contribute effectively to the day-to-day planning and the delivery of the curriculum. Children are managed very well and as a result learn to work and play with others. Although children have many varied and interesting activities, which support their learning well in most areas, there are fewer opportunities for them to learn to balance, climb and swing outdoors or to move and dance indoors during inclement weather. The high overall levels of progress children make noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

Personal, social and emotional development

42. Teaching and learning in this aspect of the foundation curriculum is good. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained. Children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children in the nursery show curiosity about their surroundings and although some are very shy when they first start school, they develop a positive approach to the new experiences school provides. Parents commented very positively about the good progress their children made in this aspect of their learning as a result of attending school.
43. Children come into the nursery happily at the start of the sessions and separate from their parents and carers with developing confidence. All staff in the school work effectively to provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere and try to minimise any minor anxieties children may have, for example having a short pre-registration session so that children do not become anxious about being late. As a result, the children feel safe and develop a growing sense of trust, learning to relate to others and form attachments to other members of the group.
44. Staff work hard to teach children to understand the needs of others and to take turns and share and children make good progress in developing self-confidence and learning the routines and procedures of the nursery. Some children rely heavily upon the support of adults in the class to try new experiences, but make good overall progress in learning to try new activities or foods. A number of children require the patient support of teachers and support staff to learn to play alongside others and to take turns with equipment, but staff are alert to potential difficulties and resolve any minor disagreements quickly and effectively.

Communication, language and literacy

45. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning is good overall, and in enhancing and developing language skills it is very good. This area of the curriculum is carefully planned and

children of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups benefit from taking part in a wide range of activities to develop language and to help the children to learn the skills they will need to read and write. The good progress noted at the time of the previous inspection has been effectively maintained. School is aware that many of the children have difficulties in this area, and a programme of sessions to develop language and communication skills has been developed. All children have time to develop their skills in small group work in the language room; this has a positive effect upon standards, which are very nearly in line with those expected in speaking and listening by the time children leave the nursery. In early pre-reading and pre writing skills they are at the level expected of children aged four.

46. Children use words and gestures, including body language, to communicate. Some use simple questions and statements to communicate needs and thoughts. All staff are perceptive and alert to the need to develop language and vocabulary and make the most of all opportunities that arise during the day. The children all enjoy listening to stories and talking about the pictures and they listen with increasing attention and recall. Teaching of pre-reading skills is very good and as a consequence children learn to enjoy books and show great interest in the illustrations. Higher attaining children are beginning to distinguish text from pictures and can point to show where the writing is on the page when their teacher asks them to "Show me where the writing is". However a significant proportion of the children do not have a broad vocabulary and this inhibits the early development of some simple concepts, for example those linked to comparison of size such as "smaller". In discussion about the story of Goldilocks, which they had already been told twice, children in one group were unsure what a jug was and did not know that a spoon was still a spoon even if it was made of wood.
47. The children respond willingly to simple instructions, but many are easily confused if more than the most basic instruction is given. For example a number of children were confused by the instruction "If you are a boy, line up at the door". Most use isolated words and phrases to communicate and are developing confidence to talk about things they know. Staff make good use of photographs of some of the main features of the immediate area, such as the sports centre and the shop, to stimulate conversations. On being shown pictures of the sports centre one child responded "Dat is my swimming!" However some simple phrases still confuse them and on being asked "How do you travel to school" another child replied "Me get some trable". Most of the discussions initiated by the children are to do with their present situation, and several chat about what they are doing as they play in the home corner or use construction equipment. None of the children in the group could understand the term "shopping list" However they enjoy these interactions and are compliant and attentive, showing great pleasure when they recognise a place they know, such as the café.
48. Most of the discussions initiated by the children are to do with the equipment they are using, and several chat about what they are doing as they play in the home corner or use construction equipment. They enjoy listening to songs and rhymes and clap or tap along with music.
49. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop early writing skills. There are a large number of enjoyable tasks during the day for children to develop appropriate hand and eye co-ordination and to manipulate objects with increasing control, and to learn about letters and numerals. The children draw and paint with developing confidence and some start to ascribe meaning to the marks they make. Higher attaining children learn to recognise and write their first name with reasonable skill by the time they leave the nursery.

Mathematical development

50. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good. The children are on course to very nearly achieve the standards expected of children of four by the time they transfer to the reception classes in local schools. Teachers and support staff work together effectively to provide children with a good range of activities to increase their knowledge and vocabulary for number. The

children show an interest in numbers and counting and enjoy joining in with the activities provided and with number rhymes and songs.

51. The curriculum is well planned to meet the requirements of the foundation stage and classes have a good range of interesting activities for the children to choose from, such as cooking and making Rangoli patterns, which provide opportunities to measure and weigh and to develop mathematical language. Most children are able to chant to five, and some chant to 13 with the teacher's support. Teaching is appropriately focused on reinforcing and developing number skills. During the week of inspection, teachers worked effectively to teach the names of the colours, how to count to five and beyond and to sort objects into groups. Most children can count to three and higher attaining children count to 20 by the end of their time in the nursery. They recognise groups with one, two or three objects, and count up to three or four objects by saying one number name for each item. They begin to represent numbers using marks on paper or pictures. Some more able children are able to construct simple, colourful graphs showing sweet colours up to a total of nine. Others draw three 'little leaves' for their autumn topic, and several higher attaining children draw and correctly identify between five and 15 care bears.
52. Teachers and nursery nurses show considerable patience in helping children's learning, and try to spend as much time as possible in one-to-one discussions with children to improve progress, especially with the youngest children who have very limited powers of concentration and can easily be distracted. The activities provided and the good quality of the teaching gives the children many opportunities to learn to use mathematical vocabulary for shape and measures during conversations, while they take part in the many activities of the nursery. They show an interest in shape and space by playing with pebbles and other objects and making arrangements of these in the sand. They match some shapes by recognising similarities and orientation such as when completing jig-saw puzzles. They learn about volume and capacity and practise pouring water from one container to another. Teachers make every effort to make good use of all opportunities for children to develop their mathematical vocabulary. They talk to them as they build wooden toy train tracks, giving good emphasis to developing use of words such as "straight" and "curved" and "longer" and "shorter". A significant proportion of the children have limited language development and this inhibits their progress in number work. For example, while most children know the concept "big" or "bigger", as a result of recent work on the story of Goldilocks, and use the word "big" in the correct context, they do not know "small", "smaller" or "middle-sized". Children are beginning to learn the names of some of the colours and some simple shapes, although for most their knowledge is still at an early stage. All the children in the two classes have learned to respond to suggestions like "line up" ready to go outside, and "sit with your friends to eat the foods from different countries we have set out", showing their growing understanding of position. Teachers are effective in using opportunities to link mathematical development to other areas of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53. Teaching of this aspect of the curriculum is good and children of all levels of prior attainment, and from all groups make good progress during their time in the nursery. Standards are well below those expected on entry to the school and very nearly in line with expectations by the time children leave. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for the children to learn about the world around them and the children respond with interest and curiosity. They use their senses regularly during investigations and sand, water, paint and collage is available for play in the classroom. They observe and manipulate objects, finding out more about them as when a small group made porridge as part of their language development work based on the story of 'Goldilocks and the three Bears'. The teacher helped to look carefully at the oats and how it mixed with the milk and to start to find words to describe what they saw. The children show an interest in why things happen and how things work and enjoy learning to make special sweets as part of their work on Diwali. They were full of excitement about what they could see as the ingredients were added and what was happening to the mixture.

54. Teachers make good use of opportunities to help children learn about change, and photographs and pictures of the children as babies are used to stimulate discussions on how they have changed. They encourage children to talk about significant things they can remember, to develop their concepts of time and some higher attaining children are beginning to differentiate between the past and the present. In designing and making, children are provided with good opportunities to use a range of construction toys and materials to build and create, joining pieces together with developing skill. They select from a good range of materials to make collages and learn to use simple tools such as scissors and glue effectively.
55. Children show an interest in information and communication technology, and teachers and support staff make appropriate use of opportunities to use computers and listening centres to develop children's skills still further. The children learn to operate simple equipment, such as musical toys effectively. However the control of the computer mouse is difficult for many of them and they require significant adult support to achieve the effect they want in their work.
56. Teachers encourage children to learn about the world in which they live. Good quality displays of plants and other objects give children good opportunities to learn about how things grow. Baby dolls are used in the home corner to reinforce how human babies need care and attention, such as feeding and nappy changing. Good use is made of photographs of the local environment to stimulate conversations on the features, which the children recognise. The school places a strong and appropriate emphasis on teaching about the cultures and beliefs of the community in which children live. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to talk about their feelings of daily activities, such as breakfast and significant personal events such as celebrations. During the week of inspection the children were learning about the festival of Diwali. Good quality displays and a rich range of artefacts and resources significantly enhanced teaching and learning of this part of the curriculum.

Physical development

57. Children start the nursery with below average skills in physical development. Good teaching and planning helps the children to achieve national expectations overall by the time they leave the school at four years old. All of the resources of the previous building are no longer available, particularly those for climbing and balancing and, as a result, the higher than average standards noted by the previous report in that aspect of learning are no longer attained.
58. Children are able to develop their skills by regularly using scissors for cutting out shapes like autumn leaves, threading needles with wool and beads, gluing with a spatula, and using simple tools in order to help make a Rangoli mat for Diwali. Teachers provide regular, good opportunities to learn to handle scissors and other equipment. Children use construction materials confidently, as well as dough and wet sand, creating imaginative shapes. Most of these activities are carefully related to the current topic being enjoyed by the children.
59. Since the move to the new premises, however there have been very limited opportunities for climbing balancing and swinging from equipment, or for indoor activities such as dance and movement. This is because the school no longer has large equipment, where children can learn to climb, use ladders or climbing frames, or a clear indoor space to learn to start co-ordinating movements through dance. As a result, the children do not make the rapid progress in this area of development noted by the previous inspection. At that time children made good progress and the standards they attained were above those expected of children of four by the time they transferred to reception.
60. The new out-door area has a range of small balance benches, small climbing frames, see-saws, a good soft safety surface and a wide selection of wheeled toys. Most children use these confidently, riding their bicycles and trolley safely and under control, and avoiding each other even

when moving at speed. They judge body space in relation to the spaces available and move freely around the outdoor play area with pleasure and confidence. They react well when in directed activities, as for example when carefully following simple instructions while using a parachute. However, when using ladders and see-saws they are less confident and approach the equipment with hesitation. Their climbing and balancing skills are not of the above average standard noted at the time of the previous report.

Creative development

61. Teaching and learning in this area of the foundation curriculum for young children is very good. Children of all levels of prior attainment, and from all groups, make very good progress in developing their skills, and the creative development of the children in the nursery is in line with the national expectation by the time children are four. The good progress noted at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained.
62. Resources have been improved since the previous inspection, which noted a limited range of good quality equipment. The children are currently given a wide variety of experiences, which enables them to develop their skills and confidence. The classrooms are an attractive and colourful environment, as are the public areas, and many examples of the children's creative work are on display for their parents and themselves to enjoy. These include finger painting, collages on paper plates, puppets, bubble painting, collages of the children themselves, constructions using sticks, leaves and berries for an autumn theme, and many creations related to the present topic of Diwali. Children are beginning to identify different colours and to explore texture and space.
63. Many of their creative activities are appropriately related to other aspects of their foundation curriculum, especially their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children regularly join in their favourite songs, responding enthusiastically with hand actions and clapping. When singing the rhyme of "When Goldilocks went to the house of the Bears," the children found it hard to tap and sing at the same time. Children involved in a lesson on language development showed great empathy with the characters of the story and their imaginations were clearly enchanted by the tale, encouraging some excited contributions.
64. In their many opportunities for independent activity, they also enjoy role-play, especially in the kitchen area - "I'm the mummy" and "I'm the policeman". They pretend that one object represents another, as when improvising with bedding when "changing the baby doll's nappy", and use available resources as props to support their role-play. They respond very positively to their opportunities to develop their senses, talking about their walk in Croxteth Park, and identifying the sights and sounds of their visit to Hesketh Park. They have also experienced and identified the different textures in objects, and use the computer regularly to create simple pictures.
65. The opportunities for children to develop creatively are plentiful, and the teaching is often very good. This is due to effective use that staff make of the good assessment strategies, which show what children can do in this aspect of learning.