

INSPECTION REPORT

KENILWORTH NURSERY SCHOOL

Bertie Road, Kenilworth

Warwickshire

LEA area: Warwickshire County Council

Unique reference number: 125488

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Harris

Reporting inspector: Pearl White

21547

Dates of inspection: 11th to 12th June 2002

Inspection number: 230315

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Foundation
Age range of children:	3-4yrs
Gender of children:	Mixed
School address:	Bertie Road Kenilworth Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV8 1JP
Telephone number:	01926 853394
Fax number:	01926 864428
Appropriate authority:	Warwickshire County Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Una Bennett
Date of previous inspection:	11 th May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21547	Pearl White	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9577	Elaine Parrish	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23026	Monica Mullan	Team inspector		How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a purpose-built nursery, centrally situated in the Warwickshire town of Kenilworth. The school has 80 children aged 3 to 4 on roll who attend on a part-time basis. The children are admitted at the beginning of the school year in which they are 4, and then transfer into reception classes in neighbouring schools. Normally children spend three terms in the nursery. The school serves a mixture of municipal, housing association and private accommodation. The school takes referrals from health visitors, social services and speech therapists. A below average proportion of children, approximately 16 percent, have special educational needs, generally with speech and language difficulties. Only two children are from families that have English as an additional language. Children enter the nursery with varying levels of pre-school experience, with nearly all having at least average and sometimes above average attainment when compared with children of a similar age. In the present cohort there is a higher proportion of younger children, so their attainment is average overall. The school has a great commitment to partnership with parents and with the community, and a new Family Partnership Centre has recently been built. The school received an Achievement Award in 2001 and an Excellence Award in 1999 to celebrate the good standards achieved.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school provides very good education, has some excellent features and cares for its children very well. It fulfils its aims well and provides an excellent, stimulating, happy and secure environment. The school is fully committed to 'inclusion' and all children are fully involved in all aspects of the school's life. Children make very good progress in the area of personal and social development, with all children having very positive attitudes to school, showing great respect for each other and behaving very well. This has a significant impact on all other areas of learning. Very good relationships are established and teaching is always good and sometimes very good. The headteacher leads the school very well, giving it a clear direction, and particularly very good leadership in supporting children's personal care. When all these positive factors are weighed against the broadly average costs, the nursery provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in personal and social development are very good and this has a very positive impact on children's attitudes to school and their learning.
- Teaching is always at least good and sometimes very good, ensuring that children have very positive attitudes to school, and create very good relationships.
- There is very good curriculum provision including excellent outdoor facilities.
- Procedures for assessment and for ensuring children's welfare are very good.
- The school has an outstanding commitment to working in partnership with parents.
- Educational priorities are effectively supported through very good financial planning.
- There is excellent accommodation and very good teaching and learning resources.

What could be improved

- The time for the children to choose their own activities is sometimes a little too long.
- Adults do not always spend enough time teaching children specific skills. This is particularly the case for some higher-attaining children in learning to read and write.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has continued to improve well since it was last inspected in May 1998. It has recently gained an Excellence Award and an Achievement Award for the good standards achieved. Children's personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world are very good. Above average standards in creative and physical development have been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards in mathematical development have improved, particularly in the use of numbers. The concerns identified in the last inspection have been addressed well overall. There is now more focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. However, early writing and reading skills for some of the higher-

attaining children still needs further development. Children are now working well in pairs and small groups, and the time for the end-of-the-afternoon session has been changed to avoid disruption by the early departure of children. Results of baseline assessments are now formally recorded and therefore provide a good starting point from which to measure progress.

STANDARDS

Children follow the Foundation Stage curriculum and are working towards the early learning goals, which are the standards expected for children by the end of the reception year. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and as a result are developing into mature and responsible individuals. This is having a positive impact on learning in all other areas of development. Standards are very good in knowledge and understanding of the world, and children make very good progress in this area of learning. Most children are in line to exceed the early learning goals in these areas of learning at the end of their year in reception. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development and creative development they make good progress and are in line to achieve, and a number will exceed, the early learning goals. Overall, this is good improvement since the last inspection. This represents good and sometimes very good achievement in relation to their age and previous experience. This is a reflection of the good and sometimes very good quality of teaching and very good curricular provision.

Boys and girls, children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language progress at similar rates. The progress made is generally similar for different groups of children compared with their age and standards achieved on entry to the nursery. This is because staff know children well and adapt most activities to meet the children's particular needs. However, some higher-attaining children do not always achieve high enough standards in the early skills of reading and writing.

CHILDREN' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. This is a strength of the school and strongly underpins learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good.
Personal development and relationships	Children's personal development is very good and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children:	aged up to 5 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

The quality of teaching is always at least good and sometimes very good. The very good teaching was seen mainly in the 'family group' sessions. The pace of learning was brisk and teaching focused on the development of key skills, and these were taught well. Children learn to listen and appreciate good stories and are able to follow the pictures and join in the 'telling' of the story appropriately. Teaching is very good in personal and social development. Due to the very good emphasis placed on this area of learning, children develop very good attitudes to school and this ensures that they make good and sometimes very good progress in all other areas of learning. Of the lessons seen, a quarter was very good. This is a strong picture, and underpins children's good level of achievement. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Nursery nurses and the learning-support assistants work well with the teachers to plan, prepare and teach the curriculum. All staff have a secure understanding of the needs of young children. They promote an atmosphere of wonder, particularly in the 'outside classroom', which captures children's natural curiosity and interest and contributes well to the very good standards achieved in knowledge and understanding of the world. Children respond positively to these activities, and learn well during their time in the nursery. Staff know the children very well and relationships are very good. Children's behaviour is

managed very effectively. The visiting music teacher uses her very good specialist skills and personal talent to raise the level of children's experience and performance beyond what is usually found. Good teaching was observed within the children's self-initiated work sessions. In these sessions, children plan their own tasks. Staff intervene well to develop learning through structured play. However, occasionally these sessions are too long and a few children lose concentration, and they move quickly from one activity to another, particularly when playing outside on the bikes and trolleys. The teaching of children who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is good and sometimes very good. Staff use questions effectively to engage these children in learning. This support ensures that they are fully included in all activities. Children with more specific needs have extra help matched to those needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good, with particular strengths in the outdoor environment.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good provision ensures that all children are fully included in all lessons and make good progress.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. The school provides good support for these children to ensure that they make progress in line with their peers.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for children's moral and social development is very good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good. The quality of care provided for all children is a strength of the school. Children are happy, secure and well supported. Procedures for assessing children's attainment are very good; procedures for monitoring and supporting children's academic progress are good.

The school has an outstanding commitment to working with parents, and this has a very positive impact on children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and her philosophy of developing the 'whole child' permeates the life of the school. The headteacher and staff work very well together as a team, and have created a very positive environment for children's learning. Procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning are good but the school is aware that they need to be developed further to identify areas for development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They are very supportive of the headteacher and her staff and are fully involved in the strategic management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has good systems to evaluate its performance. Targets are set and suitable action is taken to meet them.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The principles of best value are applied well, and all spending is carefully considered on the principle of the benefits provided to the school.

The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff. Accommodation is excellent

with an outstanding 'outside classroom'. Resources are very good and are used very well by staff to support children's learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a small number of parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• Children make good progress.• Parents are well informed.• The school works closely with parents.• The school helps children become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More progress in letter formation.• Children concentrating on one activity for a longer time.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. Children enjoy their time in the nursery, make good progress and become mature and responsible individuals. The nursery forges an excellent partnership with parents, who are kept very well informed about what happens. The team agrees, however, that a few of the higher-attaining children could benefit from concentrating on one activity for a longer time and that more progress could be made in letter formation.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

1. When they enter the school as three-year-olds, nearly all children have at least average and sometimes above average attainment when compared with children of a similar age. All children make good gains in their learning against their age and previous experience. They are on course to achieve, and a number will exceed, most of the early learning goals, which are the standards expected for children by the end of the Foundation Stage.
2. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and, as a result, are developing into mature and responsible individuals with very good attitudes to school. This ensures that they make good and sometimes very good progress in all other areas of learning. Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are very good and children make very good progress in this area of learning. Most children are in line to exceed the early learning goals in these areas of learning at the end of their year in reception. Children develop well in early reading and writing skills in relation to their age and previous experience. They have many opportunities to make good progress in developing good hand-eye co-ordination through drawing and painting; they learn a love of books and begin to recognise rhyming words in songs and poems. They are also beginning to recognise numbers and are able to match shapes well. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development and creative development they make good progress and are in line to achieve, and a number will exceed, the early learning goals. Overall, this is an improvement since the last inspection. This represents good and sometimes very good achievement and is a reflection of the good and sometimes very good quality of teaching and very good curricular provision.
3. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority and they make very good progress. As a result of well-planned routines, almost all children settle into school life well. In free-activity time they are noticeably confident in going about their regular tasks and know what is expected of them. The majority approach their work, whether in the nursery or in the 'outside classroom', with a growing sense of purpose. For example, children were seen to move outside and begin experimenting with the musical instruments and use the climbing frame with increasing confidence. They generally develop a very good understanding of how to take turns, share and show consideration for others, particularly when playing a board game with parents. Everyone is valued and children listen to one another well, as seen in the 'family group' time, when they displayed a high level of involvement and, as a result, were learning to count and use numbers very well. Children enjoy each other's company and are keen to be involved in the exciting activities provided for them.
4. Children are developing their communication, language and literacy skills across all activities in the nursery. At all times, but particularly in the 'family group' time, they are very interested and motivated to learn, for example, when they listen well to stories and respond appropriately to instructions. The majority of children communicate well with adults and each other well. A few children, however, are much more reluctant to speak and do not willingly enter into conversation with others, but some children speak with notable fluency and confidence. Children are able to concentrate well and sit quietly with a book, turning the pages appropriately and following the story through the pictures. They understand that the print holds certain meaning. However, only a few children are able to recognise simple words as there are too few opportunities provided to enable them to develop a greater familiarity with words. This means that some higher-attaining children are not always sufficiently challenged in this area of their development. This is the same as was found at the last inspection. In free-choice activities, children attempt different forms of writing, such as 'taking notes' or 'recording events'. Many children are beginning to learn to write

their own names successfully. However, because limited focused opportunities are provided, only a few can copy letters and individual words accurately.

5. Children's mathematical development is stimulated and extended through a wide range of practical activities. As a result of good teaching, children are particularly good at counting, recognising and using numbers in a familiar context. Specific targets have been set in numeracy and these have been achieved, contributing to an improvement in standards since the last inspection. Children can match and sort and acquire a growing mathematical vocabulary as they explore shapes and play with water and sand. They recognise shapes such as square, circle and triangle. Everyday occurrences such as sharing food provide opportunities, which staff use very effectively, to extend children's mathematical understanding, and at these times children show that they can take turns and share appropriately.
6. Children learn about the natural world through the many well-planned, varied and exciting activities in the nursery and in the 'outside classroom'. By digging, planting and exploring in the school garden, all children develop a greater understanding of plant life. Visits from the local Countryside Centre assist children in recognising some basic differences between birds of different species. Children celebrate festivals such as Divali and develop their understanding of other cultures by tasting a range of food. Through visits in the local area they become very aware of the local environment. They learn about past and present when thinking about when they were babies. Children show they have a developing awareness of the needs and feelings of others when, following a visit from a local doctor, they reinforce learning through role-play activities in the school 'hospital'.
7. Children's physical development is stimulated and developed well through numerous opportunities to run, jump, climb, balance and crawl on a wide range of equipment and surfaces in the excellent 'outside classroom'. They select and use the very good range of activities independently. As they write, draw and engage in craft activities, children develop appropriate levels of manipulative skill in using scissors, brushes and pencils. There is good provision of pens, pencils and crayons on tables both in and out of the nursery. However, most children access these activities only when invited by an adult. This means that some of the higher-attaining children do not always achieve the skills in writing of which they are capable.
8. Children's creative development is enhanced effectively through a wide range of stimulating activities. They create interesting and colourful pictures, collages and three-dimensional models. They use their imagination well in a thoughtfully organised range of activities, such as dressing up and role-play, for example as 'patients and doctor' in the imaginative area.
9. Children develop skills in information and communication technology in line with expectations for their age. They manipulate the computer mouse effectively and recognise that the computer responds to commands, which need to be given accurately.
10. Boys and girls, children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language progress at similar rates. The progress made is generally similar for different groups of children compared with the standards they achieve on entry to the school. This is because staff know children well and adapt most activities to meet the children's particular needs.

Children' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The attitudes, values and personal development of the children are very good. These very positive features are strength in the school and make a significant contribution to the progress made. Parents are justified in their opinions as to the high standards of behaviour at Kenilworth Nursery.
12. Children demonstrate very good attitudes towards each activity during their time in school. It is clear that most enjoy coming to school and partaking fully in the wide range of activities provided.

- They show great willingness to undertake the learning tasks, which they can choose for themselves. Familiarity with the school's routines gives them considerable confidence in tackling their work with enthusiasm and this prepares them well for their future education. The high quality activities provided for independent work are clearly enjoyed. Children co-operate well with others. When undertaking tasks that demand particular concentration, for example learning to use a saw and carpentry materials, children focus well and are prepared to make considerable efforts.
13. Very good standards of behaviour are apparent everywhere. Children relate very well to the adults around them. They have a clear understanding of what the school's general expectations are concerning behaviour. Very good early training is effective in making clear what is required of them. As a result they are seen to play and work in a non-confrontational manner. For example, they engage very productively in extended water play, co-operating fully with others in the group and benefiting greatly from it. Children are beginning to recognise the needs of others. When working, for example at 'family group' time, they are willing to take their turn and listen attentively to the contributions of others. This then enables them to get the most from opportunities for learning that the staff plan for them in these sessions.
 14. Children's personal development is similarly very good, and they are beginning to build secure relationships around school. They are generally polite and friendly towards each other, as well as towards their teachers and helpers. They take some initiative in regard to their own individual play activities and generally organise themselves appropriately. They can be trusted to take very good care of all equipment and materials. The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development found, clearly reflect the constant encouragement children receive from all staff. They are given much praise and encouragement from adults throughout the session and this serves to re-inforce ideas of good behaviour very well.
 15. Attendance is satisfactory. A member of staff greets each child as they arrive and notes their attendance in the register. There are straightforward procedures for recording and reporting absences. A few children arrive late, but this does not affect the start of the session as all children are engaged in free-choice activities at this time.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is always at least good and sometimes very good. Teaching is very good in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world, and children make very good progress in these areas of learning. Due to the very good emphasis placed on personal and social development, children develop very good attitudes to school and this ensures that they make good and sometimes very good progress in all other areas of learning. Of the lessons seen, a quarter was very good. This is a strong picture, and underpins children's good levels of achievement. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Nursery nurses and learning support assistants play a significant role in the teaching process. They work with the teachers as a team to plan, prepare and teach the curriculum. All staff have a secure understanding of the needs of young children. Inspired by the headteacher, they share a firmly held view of the importance of developing the 'whole child' and see childhood as a crucial learning period which is precious for each individual.
17. A strength of the teaching is the provision of the many, well-planned, varied and exciting activities both in and outside the nursery. Staff promote an atmosphere of wonder, particularly in the 'outside classroom', which harnesses children's natural curiosity and interest. Children respond positively to these very good activities, and make good and sometimes very good progress during their time in the nursery.
18. Staff know the children very well as individuals and relationships are very good. The management of children's behaviour is very effective. This results in children having a very clear understanding of how they are expected to behave and has a positive impact on their learning. Children are

organised in family groups, which are assigned to particular members of staff who teach the groups during 'family group' time. At other times, children are free to choose their activities and staff work with children throughout the nursery. They plan focused activities, such as assisting the children to explore the properties of clay, developing imaginative play in the school 'hospital', or introducing children to using language such as 'heavier' and 'lighter'. At other times they intervene, as they see necessary, to take learning forward.

19. The very good teaching was seen mainly in the 'family group' sessions. The pace of learning was brisk and focused on the development of key skills, and these were taught very well. Children learn to listen and appreciate good stories and are able to follow the pictures and join in the 'telling' of the story appropriately. All staff work very well together to systematically develop children's counting skills and to extend their mathematical vocabulary. At these times, children's learning is very good. This has been a main focus for development and contributes greatly to the good progress children make in their mathematical development. Children learn well because they enjoy the activities that relate to their own experience such as calculating how many pieces of fruit are needed at 'snack time', demonstrating that most children can count to 14 easily. The visiting music teacher uses her very good skills and personal talent to raise the level of children's experience and performance beyond what is usually found. A happy enthusiasm is created as the pleasures of music are successfully shared with the children. At the end of 'family group' time children are asked to choose their next activity, which they do willingly. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for reviewing the learning gained in each session. This means that children are not encouraged to evaluate their own learning.
20. Within the children's self-initiated work sessions, all teaching seen was good. In these sessions, children plan their own tasks. Nursery nurses take good opportunity to interact with other children and develop good vocabulary. For example, when studying the painted pebbles in the 'outside classroom' they were introducing children to comparative words such as 'smaller' and 'larger'. However, some of these sessions are over long and a few children lose concentration moving quickly from one activity to another, particularly when playing outside on the bikes and trolleys.
21. Personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority and this ensures that children become confident and develop very good attitudes to learning. Staff use conversation well, for example to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the current topic based on 'hospitals'. Although the majority of children are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment in communication, language and literacy, some higher-attaining children would benefit from a more specific focus on early reading and writing skills. Teaching in the area of mathematical development, which is based within children's own direct experience, is good and sometimes very good. Games and activities are well focused and support children's learning well, with children working and playing well together.
22. The teaching of children who have special educational needs is good and sometimes very good, as is the teaching of those who have English as an additional language. Staff use questions effectively to engage these children in learning. This support ensures that they are fully included in all activities. Children with more specific needs have very focused additional support. This is a positive aspect of the provision.

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

23. The curriculum provided by the school is very good and offers an exceptionally rich diversity of learning opportunities. It is generally broad and balanced and is particularly relevant to the age and needs of the children. Appropriate account is taken of the guidance provided by the early learning goals for pre-school children. The children are, thus, generally well prepared to move on to their reception classes.

24. A very high number of good quality activities are regularly available, enabling children to learn through exploration and experience. Provision in the 'outside classroom' is excellent. A great deal of thought and planning has gone into devising this exceptional resource, which presents a wonderland of imaginative, sensory and investigative opportunities. Children are able to extend their knowledge in every curriculum area through its range of intellectual and physical challenges.
25. There are suitable policies in place to direct teachers' planning. Planning is generally relevant and appropriate, and provides a good structure for teaching and progression in learning. Quality work is often preceded by the visitors who come into school, such as the Countryside Centre, theatre groups and local musicians, which all helps to broaden children's experiences. Through these visits, children's enthusiasm is stimulated as they become absorbed in their new learning. For example, a doctor came into the nursery to introduce the 'hospital' topic. Teachers' planning is good and reflects the varied opportunities taken to use both the community and the immediate environment to very good effect. This ensures that the children are able to observe closely the gradual changes in nature as the seasons progress. Staff made the most of recent building work at the school to provide an interesting and relevant topic.
26. Opportunities for the development of language and literacy abound through a wide range of stimulating and thought-provoking activities. However, insufficient emphasis is given at this stage to a more formal approach to reading and writing. Mathematical development is well catered for. This area of learning is afforded great emphasis in the curriculum, and filters through every lesson and task.
27. Most of the children have an equal opportunity to benefit from the curriculum provided. Efforts are made to ensure that children do not exclude themselves from particular activities through their own choice, but some higher-attaining children do not achieve the standards of which they are capable, in reading and writing activities. Children who have English as an additional language are fully included in all activities. Provision for children who have special educational needs is good. There are appropriate systems in place to identify children who need specific individual support, and appropriate help is quickly provided. Provision for personal and social development is an intrinsic part of the very good curriculum in place.
28. There are good links with local primary schools and with other nurseries, and this works well for the benefit of the children. The headteacher meets every half term with the heads of all local schools to discuss issues, share expertise and assist with transfers. Teachers from the local nurseries meet termly to share good Early Years practice.
29. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Features such as the sensory garden, with its tactile array of herbs and carefully selected plants, subtly engage children's feelings and moods. The amazing results of planting, growing and harvesting products of the natural world, all contribute significantly to children's spiritual development.
30. Moral development is very well provided for through the constant and consistently good example set by adults. A climate of trust is also created. This happens, for example, when opportunities are given for the children to regulate their own behaviour when playing by the wooded and other areas.
31. The school very successfully promotes the social development of its children. As they grow in maturity, there is an increasing expectation as to the standards of social behaviour expected. They are continually given the opportunity to work with others in a harmonious way. Activities are devised specifically to promote co-operation between children.

32. Provision for cultural development is good. Children have good access to plenty of books on other lands, races and cultures. Children learn of the existence of other languages through experience of books, one for example is in Urdu. They have also created a colourful woven piece, inspired by Divali lights.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

33. The school has a very warm and caring ethos that places children firmly at the centre of everything it does. All members of staff work closely together to create a very secure environment for each child, according to their individual needs and particular circumstances. All adults are unfailingly kind and children trust them completely. The very good provision for children's welfare, support and guidance noted in the last inspection report has been well maintained.
34. The nursery has developed a very good induction programme for all newcomers. Staff work very closely with parents before the children start nursery by making a visit to each child's home. Staff manage the first few weeks of the term very sensitively to ensure that any fears that parents or children may have are overcome sympathetically. Each child is allocated to a family group worker who is the first line of contact for parents and who is responsible for keeping track of the child's progress. Parents are encouraged to accompany their child into the nursery to help them to settle and then to spend time exploring the many activities that are offered.
35. There are very comprehensive child protection procedures that are well understood by all staff. The health and safety policy is detailed and is checked rigorously by the headteacher and governing body. There are no health and safety concerns and the whole school site is extremely clean and well maintained. There are good arrangements for first aid, and fire drills are now held regularly.
36. There are very good procedures to promote good behaviour and the nursery is calm and well ordered. Children are helped to understand the reasons for school rules and, if they find this difficult, a member of staff will explain quietly what is expected. For example, if a child finds it difficult to share, staff will suggest ways in which they can take turns. All parents who replied to the questionnaire felt that behaviour was good. There is no evidence of bullying or harassment and children are very clear that they must tell an adult if anything worries them.
37. The nursery takes the view that it is sometimes inappropriate for parents to rush a child to arrive on time, so that attitudes to lateness and occasional non-attendance appear quite relaxed. However, staff always ensure that parents understand the need to maintain prompt and regular attendance whenever possible and overall attendance procedures are satisfactory.
38. The school's procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress are very good. This judgement presents an improved picture since the previous inspection. The school has undertaken a successful review of assessment in order to strengthen its procedures. A good system, suitable for nursery-age children, is now in place. All staff know the children well, recognise their personal needs and generally respond quickly to them. Staff, in their family groups, build up a good picture of the children's strengths and weaknesses and give appropriate praise when children have done well.
39. Sharper emphasis is now placed on evaluating children's levels of development when they first enter the school. A comprehensive range of relevant evidence is compiled to complete a baseline assessment. Evidence from the initial home visit and appropriate application of the school's own assessment procedures help to provide useful information with which teachers can work. Results of baseline assessments are formally recorded and therefore provide a good starting point from which to measure progress. Two further formal assessments are appropriately carried out during

the nursery year. These provide further reliable evidence as to the effectiveness of the school's strategies for children's good development.

40. Monitoring of children's progress is good and based on close observation. All staff are suitably aware of this and build assessment into their daily contact with each child. The very good knowledge staff have of all the children, and the close relationships that exist in the school, help make this a successful procedure. Throughout the children's time in the nursery, the results of this everyday, ongoing assessment is productively shared amongst staff.
41. Good use is made of all the evidence gained to show how a child is developing. Planning is appropriately adapted to meet changing needs. Observations may sensibly choose to focus on particular children or specific learning activities. This enables staff to monitor more closely and, if necessary, plan to provide a different emphasis. However, some of the higher-attaining children are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve the levels of which they are capable. In lessons, teachers constantly seek to modify their approach and adapt their teaching to the current learning situation.
42. Relevant facts from the regularly kept assessment sheets are efficiently extracted to add to the more formal data stored. All the useful information gathered is now being entered on computer. As a result the headteacher will shortly have further opportunities to analyse information and consider specific points. Records of levels of achievement are appropriately passed on to the several schools to which the children progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school has shown exceptional commitment to building strong and very effective links with parents. These make an excellent impact on the quality of life within the nursery. In the inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents registered their very strong support for the school and expressed few concerns. Inspection evidence entirely supports parents' high levels of satisfaction with the way in which the school works in partnership with them. The very good partnership with parents that was found in the last inspection report has been commendably maintained and improved.
44. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in the life of the nursery and receive a warm welcome. Many parents stay to see their child settled at the beginning of a session, and even more arrive early for the end of the session to encourage children to help tidy away. All staff are very approachable and will find time to spend with parents answering queries and settling any concerns. Several parents make a regular commitment to stay for the whole session, for example to help with cookery or with the woodwork activity. The help that parents give is greatly valued by all members of staff and positively contributes to children's play.
45. The school takes great care to keep parents well informed about everything that goes on in the nursery. A weekly activity sheet is displayed on an information board in the entrance hall and there are regular, very informative newsletters. The prospectus and a helpful induction programme give clear information about school routines, and introduce ways in which parents can support their child's learning at home. In order to strengthen the parent partnership, two members of staff make home visits to exchange information about the child and the nursery. There is an open day for new parents, and parent consultations are held in the spring term. The school makes every effort to listen to parents' suggestions and responds by making any necessary changes to procedures or by introducing new ideas. Staff regularly contribute toward a Record of Achievement, which each child is given to take with them when they move on to their primary school. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed of their progress. A commendable initiative started by the nursery has been to offer parents a range of

workshops to help them support their child's learning at home. These have proved highly successful and there are plans to extend them further next term.

46. There is a flourishing and imaginative Friends' Association which contributes generously to school funds and which cements excellent relationships between parents and staff. Children have benefited from the funds raised on their behalf and by the quality of relationships forged between home and school. Parents are very appreciative of the support given by the school to the various events and see this as practical evidence of the school's exceptional commitment to building a strong home/school partnership.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The headteacher provides very good leadership and her philosophy of developing the 'whole child' permeates the life of the school. The school's aims 'to develop children as independent thinkers and learners and to have good self-esteem' are reflected in all its practices. The head has built a hardworking team of staff who work closely and support each other well. There is a shared commitment to school improvement. The nursery teacher carries out her responsibility for planning the curriculum very well. The management of arrangements for children who have special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language are good.
48. The school development plan covers a three-year period and is reviewed annually. It has very appropriate and well-considered areas for development and is a good basis on which the governors and staff can monitor and evaluate the school's performance. The actions taken to meet the school improvement targets have had considerable effect on raising standards in numeracy skills for all children. Teaching is monitored well, formally in relation to performance management and informally when the headteacher works alongside staff. Monitoring procedures now need to be further strengthened to identify where the independent activity sessions can be shortened to ensure that all children are fully involved in purposeful learning at all times. There is also a need to identify opportunities where higher-attaining children can be challenged appropriately to ensure they achieve the standards of which they are capable.
49. Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and are very supportive of the school. The new system of having parent governors with a term of office for two years is working well and is giving them the opportunity to have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and main priorities for development. There is an effective committee structure and governors make regular planned monitoring visits to the school. They have a good grasp of the budget that is needed to finance new initiatives. They are beginning to monitor the school's targets and evaluate the impact of their spending decisions. The local education authority has responsibility for the school and fulfils its statutory role.
50. The school has very effective systems for day-to-day financial management and control. The school administrator is efficient and uses new technology well. The last school audit was three years ago, and the school has dealt with the few minor points raised. Information technology is being used regularly to plan lessons. The headteacher has very good skills in financial management and ensures that the school budget is allocated for the benefit of all children in the school. She is particularly adept at identifying special grant funding and most recently has been successful in obtaining money to build the new Family Partnership Centre. The principles of best value are applied rigorously, and all spending is carefully considered on the principle of the benefits provided to the school.
51. Match of teachers, nursery nurses and support staff to the demands of the Foundation Stage curriculum are good and they all make a significant contribution to the very good curriculum provision in the nursery. The visiting teacher, who provides particular support for children with special educational needs, contributes effectively to their development.

52. Performance management has appropriately begun for all staff. Staff training needs are identified during this process and then appropriately linked to the school development plan. The good induction procedures have been used effectively to introduce the new teacher to the life of the school.
53. The provision of learning resources in the school continues to be very good overall. The 'outside classroom' is excellently resourced. It contains a wonderful range of wooden features and equipment of high and enduring quality. There are large, inviting structures which enable children to sit, climb, explore, imagine and make music in a huge variety of ways. The school is generally very well equipped with plenty of the large play materials suitable for active learning. There is also plenty of smaller equipment to ensure that the full curriculum can be easily supported and supplied. A great many attractive books are available everywhere. These are of suitable interest and size to be readily handled by small children. Access to the books is easy and this encourages their use. The school has appropriately invested in sufficient computers and other large electrical equipment to meet its current needs. All materials are very well organised and stored. This encourages children to take great care of the resources, as they know where things belong and can be found.
54. The school is justly proud of its excellent premises, which enable staff to offer a stimulating range of indoor and outdoor activities. The 'outdoor classroom' and playground area have been imaginatively designed with an exciting range of resources which children cannot wait to access at the start of each session. Major alterations to extend the entrance area and create a parents' room and a multi-function room are almost complete. The accommodation is further enhanced by rich and colourful craft and artwork, which the children have helped to make. A conscientious caretaker who takes great pride in her duties maintains the premises very well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Shorten the length of time for children to choose their own activities and use the extra time available to promote more focused learning activities, particularly for the higher-attaining children.
(Paragraph nos. 4, 20, 21, 63, 66, 81, 82)

In addition to the key issue listed above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- Give children more opportunity to review their own learning. (Paragraph no. 19)
- Strengthen the monitoring of teaching and learning further to identify areas for continual development.
(Paragraph no. 48)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	9	0	0	0	0
0	25	75	0	0	0	0

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

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)	40

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	14

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Ethnic background of children

	No of children
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0

Any other minority ethnic group	2
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This table refers to children of compulsory school age only.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	183,588
Total expenditure	175,975
Expenditure per pupil	2199
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,366
Balance carried forward to next year	21980*

*This money was identified for the building of the Family Partnership Centre.

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of children per qualified teacher	40

Total number of education support staff	2.7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83.5

Number of children per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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	80
Number of questionnaires returned	43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	91	9	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	21	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	77	21	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	79	21	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	93	5	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	81	19	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	12	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	26	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	91	7	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	19	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	84	16	0	0	0

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

Personal, social and emotional development

55. All children, including those from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds and those with special educational needs, achieve standards in this aspect of their development that are well above expectations. Most children are in line to exceed the early learning goals by the end of their year in reception. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.
56. As a result of well-planned routines, almost all children are very well settled in school. A tangible air of safety and security exists in which the children thrive. For example, children at the beginning of sessions move quickly and independently into the outside area to experiment with the musical instruments or scramble up the climbing frame. They are noticeably confident in going about their regular tasks and know exactly what is expected of them. The majority approach their work, whether in the 'outside' or inside classrooms, with a growing sense of purpose.
57. Many still choose to work and play alone in the free-choice sessions, and are observed in quiet concentration on their chosen tasks, for example, when absorbed in an activity on the computer. Almost all will, at some time, select activities that require the association of at least one other child. They have generally developed a very good understanding of how to take turns, share and show consideration for others. When, for example, sharing work on the new pulleys in the sandpit, they are seen to make use of already established skills to negotiate the situation with reasonable success. Constructive co-operation takes place in the many activities that occur in the independent play sessions. This is also reflected in the 'family group' sessions. They listen very well to questions and answers and give way appropriately as others have their say. They are able to express their own feelings as, for example, when expressing a preference for a particular poem. They are also beginning to understand that other people have feelings as well, particularly when playing imaginatively in the school 'hospital'.
58. Most children are very independent when seeing to their own needs. They do not allow time to be wasted through unnecessary delays. Through imitating the high standards expected in the school, they treat everything with great respect. They take good care of all the quality equipment and materials available to them. They are developing an understanding of the need to put things away properly. Some are reasonably independent in doing this, and are greatly helped by the very good arrangements for storing things.
59. Children relate very well to all the adults who teach them. These strong relationships provide a firm foundation within which the children can progress. Teaching of this aspect is very good. There is great strength in the way staff share the same levels of commitment to the children's wellbeing. They manage to convey this concern to the children very successfully, for example, when they are welcomed individually into the nursery and encouraged to settle immediately to activities. Great consistency in approach, and the common enthusiasm for the children to do well, are significant factors in promoting the very good development in this area.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Children continue to do well in this area of learning in relation to their age and previous experience when starting nursery. Most children will achieve, and some will exceed, the early learning goals in this area, by the end of their reception year.
61. In the important skill of listening, their standards are above average. The good levels attained in this important aspect of learning have a very beneficial effect on everything else they experience

at school. They routinely sit very quietly and listen attentively to all instructions and explanations. There are particular strengths in the way they are able to listen to, and appreciate, the good stories and poems provided. When, for example, hearing the story of 'The Runaway Chapatti', they involve themselves very well and become completely absorbed in the unfolding text.

62. Standards in speaking are generally good overall in relation to their age. A few children enter the nursery with speech and language difficulties and are more reluctant to speak, and do not willingly enter into conversation with others. A number of children have achieved levels of speech that are significantly above this. These children speak with notable fluency and confidence. Many have a fairly wide vocabulary, which they call upon effectively to sustain a conversation and argue their own case where necessary. For example, when looking for his sister's pebble in the 'pebble pond' one child was able to argue his point and say, 'That's not it because that one has chicken pox'. The majority of children communicate with adults and each other well. They commonly use short and part sentences to talk and share experiences.
63. The children enjoy a wide range of books. Most children are confident and comfortable when selecting and handling them, particularly those with which they are most familiar. When required to do so, they are able to concentrate well and sit quietly with a book, turning the pages appropriately and following the story through the pictures. They understand that the print in books, as well as all the writing that surrounds them in the classroom environment, holds certain meaning. The majority are able to recognise their own names. Most children are beginning to comprehend the significance of differing letter sounds and can often appreciate rhyme in poems. However, only a few children are able to recognise simple words as there are too few opportunities provided to enable them to develop a greater familiarity with words. This means that some higher-attaining children are not always sufficiently challenged in this area of their development. This is a similar situation to that found in the previous inspection.
64. General language development is greatly enhanced through the many very good opportunities provided for concentrated role-play. For example, children make good progress as they involve themselves in the school 'hospital' and 'police emergency station', take turns and negotiate well who will be the patient and who will be the doctor. They act out their varying parts with imagination, showing increased ability to follow through the story or incident. Their knowledge of the purposes of writing is growing satisfactorily. In the many good play situations organised, they are seen to 'take notes' and 'record' events to match the situation created. Some also ascribe meaning to their own marks on paper which, for example, accompany a picture of their own. Some are able to tell more extensive stories featuring a sequence of events reasonably coherently, which adults can record for them in writing. Many children are beginning to learn to write their own names successfully. However, only a few can copy letters and individual words accurately, and some higher-attaining children do not always achieve the standard of which they are capable.
65. Teaching of most aspects of language is good and sometimes very good, particularly in the 'family group' sessions when there is a good focus on developing speaking, listening and early reading skills. Overall, children make good progress as some children come to nursery with specific speech and language problems. Children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make similar progress. All staff make continuous efforts to promote good development in this area. There is much good practice in extending children's achievements in acquiring new ideas, by providing the relevant vocabulary required to support them. Children whose levels of speech are still undeveloped for their age and ability receive a great deal of good quality targeted support, particularly by the visiting special needs teacher. Staff are alert to opportunities to extend abilities in language. They give plenty of appropriate assistance to enable children to interpret their own thoughts verbally. Occasionally, the enthusiasm of adults to do this, causes them to dominate conversations, and not give children enough time to form their own more thoughtful contributions. Teachers are very successful in linking every aspect of school life with language development.

Mathematical development

66. During their time in the nursery, children make good progress so that when they leave most are on course to meet, and many will exceed, the nationally expected standards by the end of their reception year. As a result of good teaching, children are particularly good at counting, recognising and using numbers in familiar contexts. Specific targets have been set in numeracy and these have been achieved, contributing to an improvement in standards since the last inspection.
67. Staff develop children's mathematical language well. For example, when working in the outdoor sandpit most children are able to identify the heavier of two buckets, while the higher-attaining children are using language such as 'heavier than' and 'lighter than' well. Through the use of storybooks such as 'The Three Bears' children understand the difference between 'big' and 'little' and can identify the 'middle-sized' bear. Children understand similarities and differences and can choose two socks that are the same to make a pair. Scrutiny of work shows that children have had opportunities to calculate how large a piece of paper should be to measure the circumference of a head and to compare the sizes when drawing around shoes in the 'shoe shop'. They also recognise squares, circles, triangles and rectangles. Children co-operate very well when encouraged to explore mathematical ideas for themselves and begin to solve practical problems. For example, when tidying away wooden blocks at the end of the session, the teacher led a discussion on the shapes of bricks, skilfully teasing out their ideas, whilst helping them to express why some shapes fitted together well and some did not.
68. In carefully focused 'family group' sessions, all staff work very well to systematically develop children's counting skills and extend their mathematical vocabulary. At these times their learning is very good, as children listen attentively and show a high level of involvement in these sessions. This has been a main focus for development and contributes greatly to the good progress the children make in this area of learning. Children learn well because they enjoy activities that relate to their own experience, such as calculating how many pieces of fruit are needed at 'snack time'. This demonstrates that most children can count to 14 easily. They enjoy counting in 2s up to 10 and show increased confidence when they are able to spot errors when the teacher deliberately counts incorrectly or muddles up number cards.
69. Children take turns and are sensitive to the needs of others when playing a game with parents. Most children demonstrate that they can count the spots on a dice up to 6 and move a toy accurately along and up a board. Children with special educational needs make good progress, as do children for whom English is an additional language, as staff intervene appropriately to take children's learning forward and extend mathematical language. More-able children identify numbers on the '100 square' and know that 100 comes after 99. Teachers are starting to introduce the vocabulary of 'more than' and 'less than'. They can also find the total number of two groups, as shown when they use their fingers to show that 5 and 5 make 10.
70. For the majority of the session, children are able to choose activities for themselves and mathematical activities are always available. Staff now present activities in an interesting and stimulating way. Children have access to a wide range of sorting, matching and ordering experiences, with telephones, keyboard and phone book readily available to stimulate imaginative play. Staff intervene sensitively and develop children's learning well. In other areas of learning, children gain mathematical knowledge and understanding in incidental ways. Good intervention by the teacher encourages children, when playing well together in the school 'hospital', to count out the spoonfuls of medicine and demonstrate that they know 100 is more than 30. They are also encouraged to record the number on a chart. However, as yet not many are able to write recognisable numbers and this is a similar situation to that found in the previous inspection. Children benefit from using a good range of programs on the computers. During outside play, children's understanding of position is effectively reinforced. They play in the garden area and talk about going 'in and out', while having opportunities to climb 'up' and 'down' and ride the bikes 'in

front of' and 'behind' obstacles. The nursery is well decorated with mathematical and number displays, which support children's learning well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children are provided with many well-planned, varied and exciting activities in the nursery and in the 'outside classroom', as well as good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world through visits in the local area. Teaching is very good with staff promoting an atmosphere of wonder, particularly in the 'outside classroom', which captures children's natural curiosity and interest. They respond positively to these activities, and make very good progress during their time in the nursery. Most children will exceed the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of their reception year.
72. Well-planned activities encourage children to use all their senses and introduce them to a world of meaningful experiences that they enjoy immensely and from which they learn well. For example, a visit from the local Countryside Centre assisted children in recognising some basic differences between birds of different species. When studying photographs one child was able to describe how 'an egg changed into a chick and then into a cockerel'. By digging, planting and exploring in the school garden, most children develop a greater understanding of plant life. By planting beans and studying the changes as they grow, they are learning to understand that plants have leaves and roots. The higher-attaining children are able to recognise the differences as they grow and record the changes appropriately in drawings. Children enjoy experimenting with the percussion instruments in the outside play area. In a well-taught, focused music session, children listened with enjoyment to a guitar and used appropriate actions well to accompany songs. They enjoy looking in the differently textured mirrors around the nursery, commenting on how the distorted ones 'make you look funny'. A child with special educational needs played confidently with water, enjoying the experience, and good intervention from a teacher ensured that he became familiar with the concepts of 'floating' and 'sinking'. Children who speak English as an additional language make very good progress because of the relevant and well-prepared activities and the good quality of adult support. By celebrating the festival of Divali, for example, and tasting different foods, children are developing a growing awareness of the beliefs and cultures of other people.
73. Children are given many good opportunities to find out about past and present events in their own lives and those of other people they know. Following a visit from a mother and father with their baby, children took great delight in thinking about what they could do now, compared with what they could not do when they were babies. Through role-play activities, such as, in the school 'hospital', children reinforce their learning when engaging in supported imaginative play inspired by a visit from a local doctor. Visits to the local shops enable children to become increasingly aware of their local environment and the people who work there.
74. All staff are readily involved in planning activities based on first-hand experiences, ensuring that children are interested, motivated and challenged. For example, the construction of the new building was used as a central theme to encourage observation, exploration, critical thinking and discussion about the man-made world. Children were encouraged to study the plans of the building, make their own sketches and to construct models with the very many construction kits made available. A lively discussion arose when children working in the sandpit used pulleys to higher and lower buckets, and the higher-attaining children likened this to the crane that had been used on site. Staff intervened well, developing children's language through a debate on how 'roof trusses' were placed on the top of buildings.
75. Relevant activities, such as baking biscuits, ensure that children know about healthy eating, how food is prepared and how to use equipment safely. A cooking session was particularly well organised with children being encouraged to observe and discuss the changes when different ingredients are mixed together. However, although the children thoroughly enjoyed the session

they were given limited opportunity to be independent and actually break the egg and spoon the flour for themselves.

76. Children's skills in information technology develop effectively as they practise using the 'mouse' to point the arrow, drag images across the screen and choose colours and tools to draw simple pictures. Tape recorders are provided so that children can start to learn to control this equipment when listening to a story or songs and they do this very co-operatively, particularly when supported by a parent.
77. Children's scientific understanding develops well as they use the exciting sensory equipment in the nursery. Experimenting with coloured bottles and transparency sheets gives children opportunities to become increasingly aware of how light behaves and how they can affect it. They watch with wonder at the many changes in colour as they wave tubes of coloured lights in the air. Good teaching enabled a group to investigate well with magnets.

Physical development

78. Children's physical development is above average and by the end of the reception year most children will be able to move with confidence, imagination and safety, with a number exceeding the early learning goals in this area of development.
79. Teaching in this area of learning is at least good and is sometimes very good. The provision of the imaginative 'outdoor classroom' is a major factor in helping children make very good progress in developing good control and co-ordination. Here they can run, jump, balance and climb using a good range of equipment. Children show very good skills in controlling their movements as they enjoy pushing and pulling trolleys and riding bikes along the paths and in and out of the pergolas. As they play together very well, they show awareness of the needs of others in the space around them.
80. Most children are able to use the fixed play equipment well; they climb confidently, move stealthily along the top and slither down the slide. A higher-attaining pupil was seen to have secure judgement and a good sense of balance as she moved carefully from one tree stump to another. In a music session all children were seen to join in action songs with confidence, controlling their bodies well. A group of special needs children were learning well to control their hand and arm movements when seen successfully throwing a soft ball to each other.
81. Children enjoy the free access they have to this area throughout the session, however at times some children choose to play here exclusively. This means they have limited opportunities to experience the wide variety of activities on offer in other areas of the nursery. Also, at times the free-play sessions are a little too long and children lose interest and begin to wander between different activities without sustaining their concentration during their own planned time.
82. Staff provide many well-planned opportunities for children to acquire skills when handling tools and construction and malleable materials safely. A well-planned woodwork activity gave staff the opportunity to teach the children how to use the saw and hammer carefully. Children have many opportunities to make good progress in developing good hand-eye co-ordination through drawing and painting. They become increasingly able to handle drawing, painting and modelling materials. For example, when making a sculpture they manipulated clay well around a wooden branch. Nursery staff teach cutting and sticking skills well in meaningful situations. For example, children are encouraged to use sellotape carefully to join boxes when making a junk model. There is good provision of pen, pencils and crayons on tables both in and out of the nursery. When recording in the school 'hospital' one average-attaining child was not sure how to hold his pencil, but some higher-attaining children were able to use pencils and copy their names satisfactorily from a 'reference book'. However, most children only accessed these activities when invited by an adult. This means that some higher-attaining children do not always achieve the skills in writing, of which

they are capable. Because of the school's aim to encourage children to be independent, they soon begin to fasten buttons and take their shoes on and off. They make good progress in learning to use construction equipment and other materials safely and with increasing control.

Creative development

83. The children continue to achieve above average standards in creative development. Possibilities for this aspect to develop well are plentiful in both the inside and outside areas of the school. Most children at the end of the year in reception are in line to achieve, with a number exceeding, the early learning goals in this area of development.
84. The children undertake a good variety of painting for different purposes. They use different colours effectively to produce pictures that tell a story, or represent some particular person or object. They apply their developing skills in a confident and structured manner when presenting their ideas. Some good work is achieved following a stimulating visit from the Countryside Centre. For example, an interesting variety of painted cockerels is well conveyed in display.
85. The children are able to explore and experiment with such materials as clay and dough proficiently. With adult guidance, they are involved in the production of three-dimensional creations, such as the attractive and substantial textured piece with an 'icy-blue' theme. They have the experience of using many different textures and materials, such as coloured cellophane and sequins to construct very pleasing mobiles. Good collage work also adds variety and extends the children's skills usefully.
86. Other opportunities for first-hand creative development occur frequently. There are many good examples of children growing their own plants, including lettuce and potatoes. They are also continually involved in purposeful role-play in a great many learning situations. These activities provide rich creative experiences for the imagination and are a strong component of what is achieved in this area.
87. Music makes a very good contribution to the children's creative experiences. During 'family group' sessions, they sing regularly and perform a range of traditional nursery rhymes quite confidently. They listen to a range of recorded music, which is helping develop musical understanding well. Outside they have access to a particularly impressive arrangement of large wooden and metal instruments with which they can all freely experiment. In more formal music lessons, above average standards are reached. The children listen very well and sing tunefully together in accompaniment to the guitar. They use appropriate actions and demonstrate a good sense of rhythm. They are able to sing a simple tune in a great many different ways using many different types of sound. Their recognition of the number of beats in a word, and the ability to count them is good. Above all, they enjoy their music lessons and co-operate well in playing percussion instruments properly and obeying the appropriate signals.
88. Teaching is always at least good and often very good in this aspect of learning. Teachers are able to give children a great deal of confidence to undertake their practical projects and to see them through to completion. They are particularly supportive in extending imaginative play and are seen to work hard at fully involving all children. The visiting music teacher uses her very good skills and personal talent to raise the level of children's experience and performance beyond that which is usually found. A happy enthusiasm is brought out as the pleasures of music are successfully shared with the children.