

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **THE SLADE NURSERY SCHOOL**

Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 122970

Headteacher: Mrs Maggie Neil

Reporting inspector: Mrs Lorna Brackstone  
21872

Dates of inspection: 28 - 30 January 2002

Inspection number: 230348

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	30 March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21872	Lorna Brackstone	Registered inspector	Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9880	Tony Comer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
24342	Denise Franklin	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Mathematical development Creative development Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The nursery is situated in the Wood Farm ward that covers a relatively large district in the Headington area of Oxford. The area has a large concentration of social housing, which accommodates a number of socially disadvantaged families. This includes a high concentration of single parent households. It is a relatively mobile population because many of the properties are flats or two-bedroom houses. However, children from neighbouring affluent areas and those from new housing developments also attend the nursery. The nursery has a wide cultural mix that includes white, Asian, Afro-Caribbean and Middle Eastern population and there is a combination of professional, skilled and unskilled workforce. It has 40 full-time equivalent places for nursery-aged children and also for 23 in their reception year. They are usually admitted into the nursery at the age of three and a half but there are a number of places available for children who have special educational needs. In September 2001 Slade Nursery and Wood Farm First School, which share the same site, opened an early years unit. This was planned to help Wood Farm First School's falling roll, give continuity and provide children who would normally be in the reception class in the first school access to outside and other resources. Children who intend going to the adjoining school remain in the unit until the start of the year in which they will be six. Children who transfer to other schools do so in the term after they are five. Thirteen children use English as an additional language, three of whom are at a very early stage of language acquisition. Many of children start school with poor attainment in speech and language and some have poor behaviour patterns.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a highly effective nursery school. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent and the quality of teaching is very good. Curriculum provision is of high quality and through the use of very good assessment procedures the needs of all children are met. Although most children start the nursery with poorly developed skills, they make very good progress and reach the nationally agreed levels in all the areas of learning by the time they start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. The nursery provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The children make very good progress. They achieve the expected levels at the end of the Foundation Stage despite starting from a low level on entry into the nursery.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent.
- The children are provided with a very well balanced and rich curriculum, which is appropriately based on the recommended Early Learning Goals.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the children are very good.
- The school cares very well for its children. Very good use is made of assessment procedures to ensure that the provision meets the needs of all children.
- Parents have the highest regard for the nursery and work very closely with staff.

#### **What could be improved**

- The nursery has no weaknesses.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The nursery has improved very well since the last inspection. Curriculum planning has developed very well and all areas of learning have detailed policies and extensive schemes of work. Comprehensive assessment procedures enable the careful monitoring of the children and this ensures that participation in activities can be carefully tracked. Regular opportunities are now provided for the children to review and discuss with adults what exactly they have been involved in. The overall quality of teaching has improved and is now very good. The leadership and management of the school have improved and are excellent.

## STANDARDS

Whilst there is a wide range of attainment, a high percentage of children enter the nursery with poorly developed skills in all areas of learning. This is confirmed by the assessments made soon after they start school. Children make very good progress in all areas of learning and the vast majority have achieved the early learning goals by the time that they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. A minority of children start nursery with appropriately developed skills. They make very good progress and exceed the recommended goals in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. Children make very good progress in all areas due to the very rich curriculum provided, the very high commitment to early years education and the overall very good quality of teaching and learning.

## PUPIL'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes and really like going to the nursery. They are enthusiastic about their learning.
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good throughout the nursery.
Personal development and relationships	Children enjoy very close relationships with staff and make good friends with their peers. They have a very good understanding of how to treat their friends and do so with respect. They take responsibility for a number of jobs and these are carried out with great care.
Attendance	Although attendance is not statutory both the children and adults rarely miss any sessions.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Very 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 overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. During the inspection 21 lessons or part sessions were observed and 15 of these were very good and six were good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The children are managed excellently and

expectations are of the highest standard. All adults have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of this age group and activities are very well planned. Basic skills are taught to a high standard and very good use is made of time, available staff and resources. A wide range of very effective teaching methods is used and the children gain a clear awareness of how they are achieving through positive feedback and instant rewards. Good use is made of books and number games that can be borrowed and shared at home.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Staff plan a very well-balanced and rich curriculum and all areas of learning are included.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Provision for children with special educational needs is excellent. Targets are specific and clearly meet the needs of the children.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Very good provision is made for children for whom is English as an additional language. Close links are nurtured with the parents and the children are very well supported in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is excellent. Social and moral development is of the highest quality. Spiritual and cultural development is very good. The school's extremely positive ethos and aims permeate the life of the school and contributes very effectively to the children's development.
How well the school cares for its children	The school takes great care of its children and ensures that they are safe. Procedures for assessment are very good and are used very well to ensure that the needs of all the children are met.

Parents' views of the nursery are of the highest quality and they work very closely with all the staff.

#### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she has a very clear vision for the future. An experienced and dedicated team fully supports her and together they ensure that the aims of the nursery are met.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery and play an important part in shaping its direction. They fulfil statutory requirements well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The nursery monitors the quality of teaching and learning very carefully and links any weaknesses into the school development plan. They have started collecting and analysing entry data and

	this is providing them with very detailed information from which they plan from.
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The strategic use of resources	All resources are used very well. The headteacher and governors actively seek to apply for specific grants and make very good use of any monies available. Best value principles are very clearly understood.
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The match of teachers and support staff is adequate to the demands of the Foundation Stage curriculum although at times they feel over-stretched. The accommodation is satisfactory; there is a very good outdoor area but there are no specialist rooms or teaching areas inside. Learning resources are adequate.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like going to nursery.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the nursery.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• They are happy with the way in which the nursery is led and managed.</li> <li>• They feel the nursery is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They feel that the nursery works closely with them and they are well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The nursery provides a good range of interesting activities.</li> <li>• The nursery expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• They are happy with behaviour in the nursery.</li> </ul>	

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views of the parents. Only one parent felt that they did not receive sufficient information about their child's progress but the inspection team does not support this comment.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. The nursery follows closely the Early Learning Goals, which form the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum. This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or '*stepping-stones*', from which progress and standards can be measured. Whilst there is a wide range of attainment, a high proportion of children enter the nursery with poorly developed skills in all areas of learning. This is confirmed by the assessments made soon after they start school. Children make very good progress in all areas of learning and the vast majority have achieved the Early Learning Goals by the time they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. A minority of children start nursery with appropriately developed skills. They also make very good progress and exceed the recommended goals in all areas of learning by the time they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. Children make very good progress in all areas due to the very rich curriculum, the very high commitment to early years education and the overall very good quality of teaching and learning. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection.
2. Children start the nursery at the age of three and a half. The very high quality of teaching and learning ensures that these children achieve well and they quickly start to attain the first and second level of the '*stepping stones*'. All activities are planned to ensure that all the needs of the children are met. For example, higher attaining average children who are confident and have good speaking and listening skills, achieve well through individual well-planned activities where they work and interact independently. On the other hand, adults support lower attaining children to ensure that sufficient progress is being made in their learning. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum, the children have maintained this good progress and most have achieved the final stage or '*stepping stone*' in the Foundation Stage curriculum and progress overall is very good. Standards in all areas of learning have been maintained since the last inspection.
3. The nursery aims to ensure that all individual needs will be identified so that children's learning will be fully enhanced. This is evident throughout the whole nursery. The headteacher and staff are continually striving to ensure the highest learning opportunities for the children and this is clearly achieved.
4. The nursery is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all the children. Most of the children with special educational needs attain the nationally recommended standards in all areas of learning and make very good progress. Children with either learning difficulties or behavioural problems are very closely monitored and staff record their achievements carefully. Parents are kept very well informed and, in turn, they are actively encouraged to inform staff of any problems occurring at home that might affect their child's rate of progress.
5. Children who use English as an additional language make very good progress in all areas of learning because they are given very high quality support. This enables them to have equal access to all the learning activities and to achieve as well as the other children. The very effective links that have been established with parents who use English as an additional language also have an important impact on the standards achieved by these children.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

6. The children's attitudes to school are very good. They enjoy coming to school and the great majority are interested and involved in lessons. Many are able to work independently and enter into discussions confidently.
7. Overall, children's behaviour is very good and there is no evidence of oppressive behaviour. They respect each other's feelings and play happily together in the playground.
8. Relationships between children, and between children and adults, are very good. There is range of opportunities for children to develop personal and social skills, including planned group times, visits to the open market, meal and snack times during the day, and the encouragement that they are given to make choices about activities. They are given opportunities to take responsibility by acting as class helpers.
9. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the children have improved since the last inspection and make a significant contribution to effective learning. Parents believe their children like school and know they make good progress. They also agree that the children are expected to work hard and the school helps them to become mature and responsible. The inspection evidence supports these views.
10. Children's attendance is satisfactory overall; they arrive punctually and lessons start on time. Registration periods are used effectively as a means of starting lessons calmly and as an opportunity to communicate with parents.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

11. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. During the inspection 21 lessons or part sessions were observed and 15 of these were very good and six were good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is a good improvement since last inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be good overall.
12. All staff have the very highest expectations of the children. Both teachers and nursery nurses continually strive to ensure that the needs of all the children are met. The children are carefully nurtured and are expected to do their very best at all times. The high expectations are particularly evident during independent activity times when very skilful adult intervention ensures that the children's knowledge and skills are carefully developed. For instance, a group of children pretended to be firemen and created a fire engine from crates. This learning opportunity was extended further through questioning and discussion with the children. Only the highest quality of behaviour is acceptable. For example, in a small group activity time the children were required to find matching pairs. One child grabbed his matching item and then threw it at the nursery nurse. Her response was clear and both the child concerned and all other group members quickly became aware that this was not acceptable behaviour.
13. The management of children is excellent. They are very carefully supervised in both small group sessions and during independent activities. All adults manage the differing needs of the children with real skill and professionalism. Younger and less confident children are encouraged to take part or join in activities whilst older, more confident youngsters are persuaded to be involved in more challenging situations, such as role play which involves other individuals. The organisation of the nursery is

very successful and has been carefully planned to ensure that behaviour management is a high priority. All areas of the nursery, both indoors and outdoors, are visible to staff and this makes inappropriate behaviour difficult to achieve.

14. The knowledge and understanding of the teachers and nursery nurses are very good. They have a detailed knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and clearly know how the children need to develop intellectually, physically and creatively. Basic skills are taught very well and a wide variety of techniques are used to stimulate and motivate the children. For example, some very excellent use has been made of the National Literacy Strategy techniques to encourage reading skills. Teachers share big picture books with the children in small group time and this stimulates their interest in the written word. Very good use is made of number rhymes and games to encourage the use of mathematical language in everyday life.
15. The quality of planning is very good and covers each area of the Foundation Stage curriculum effectively. There is a very good balance between small group times with an adult focus and individual initiated learning through play. Teachers and nursery nurses pitch the content of their focused lessons very well and topics, which will maintain the children's interest, are chosen carefully. For example, making ice-lollies and then watching them melt as they eat ensures that the children gain knowledge but also enjoy what they are doing.
16. Time is never wasted in the nursery. All group times are appropriate in length and meet the needs of the differing age groups. Children are encouraged to tidy up activities quickly and this they do with a real sense of urgency. All staff are used very well to meet the needs of the children and even when the children are fruitfully involved in their independent play there are never times when adults are stood around not engaged in an activity. All learning resources, including those that promote information and communication technology skills, are used to best effect.
17. Throughout the day adults are continually assessing the learning of the children. They listen carefully to what individuals say both in group times and in their play and use this information to carefully evaluate the acquisition of skills. Both teachers and nursery nurses constantly praise good behaviour and hard work and this successfully ensures that the children are gaining a good awareness of their learning.
18. Children who have special educational needs are taught very well. Learning or behaviour needs are very quickly identified and individual programmes developed to ensure that very good progress is made. Children for whom English is an additional language are taught very well through skilful interactions in their play and individual support during group times.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the children are very good and this has a positive impact on their learning. It is broad, balanced and very relevant to meet the needs of all children in the Foundation Stage. There is very good provision for purposeful play and children are given very good opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge through a balance of adult directed and child-initiated activities. All staff keep very detailed records and close observations to ensure that all children are participating in a balanced range of activities and that the children have experience of all the areas of learning, identified in the Foundation Stage curriculum. This has successfully addressed an issue in the previous report to ensure that all

children receive a balanced curriculum. All children have equal access to the curriculum and the school is fully committed to inclusion. There are good effective strategies in place for teaching numeracy. The strategies for teaching literacy are very good. The children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

20. The classrooms are clearly organised to enable children to have a base at the start of each day and for group teaching sessions. This enables children of reception age to be taught separately from the younger children for literacy and numeracy. Throughout the day the rooms are designated for a wide range of learning opportunities. The outdoor facilities are very good and help to promote children's physical and creative development very well.
21. Curriculum planning is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. There are comprehensive schemes of work for each area of learning, ensuring progression, through the stages of development or '*stepping stones*', which lead to the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Coordinators provide very detailed half-term plans for each area of learning, following discussions with the rest of the staff. Weekly plans and details of focused activities set out clear objectives for learning and ensure that activities are very well planned to meet the needs of children according to age and ability. These plans are displayed in the classrooms so that all staff and parents have access to curriculum information. Photographic evidence very clearly illustrates the opportunities provided for the children to enable them to achieve the Early Learning Goals set out in the Foundation Stage curriculum.
22. Provision for children with special educational needs is excellent. Each child identified on the special educational needs register has an individual education plan. The plans identify measurable individual targets, which are reviewed regularly. All staff are aware of the set targets and are fully involved in monitoring the children's progress. Regular discussions are held between staff to identify children who are causing concerns so they can be monitored and appropriate strategies put in place to meet their needs. Children who speak English as an additional language are very well supported by both the regular staff and by their learning support assistant.
23. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. It permeates very effectively through the whole curriculum. One of the topics covered during the autumn term is 'You and Me', which provides very good opportunities for children to learn about personal hygiene, for example, cleaning their teeth and regularly washing. The 'Life Education Unit' also comes to the school annually to support the teaching of the personal, social and health education curriculum. Staff regularly take part in role-play activities to demonstrate to the children how to be kind to each other. Sex education is age appropriate and the school aims to answer any questions honestly and sensitively. For example, very good use is made of the life-cycles of living creatures. This makes a positive impact on their learning.
24. The school makes very good provision for children to take part in extra-curricular activities such as visits to places of interest and visitors to school. For example, children have the opportunity to visit the theatre, a wild life park, covered market and a cake shop. Visitors to school include the police and fire services and artists in residence. This provision makes a very positive impact on the children's learning.
25. The school's links with the local community are good and have improved since the last inspection. The school is regarded as being at the heart of community life with very strong links and involvement with the Wood Farm Action Group. Funding has

been provided by the local university colleges for a recent healthy living initiative and by the Oxford Philomusica for a programme of musical activity. The school also gets some support from the local business community.

26. There are strong links with the other schools in the area. A nursery nurse meets regularly with the leaders of three local playgroups. The headteacher meets with the headteachers of the five first schools that most children eventually attend. This ensures a smooth and effective transfer.
27. The overall provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school's extremely positive ethos and aims permeate the life of the school and contribute very effectively to the children's development.
28. Provision for spiritual development is very good and is often identified in planning. Opportunities are provided for children to reflect and think about their work, particularly during group times at the start and end of each session and before the children have their lunch. For example, the children were asked to think about the children who recently lost their homes in the earthquake. The school garden is well used to foster awe and wonder in the natural world. The school has justifiable pride in the school garden that has won 'Oxford in Bloom' awards and from which children derive a significant amount of pleasure and development. Throughout the year the celebrations of different festivals such as Harvest, Diwali, Eid, Christmas and the Chinese New Year provide valuable insight into different beliefs. Provision has improved significantly since the last inspection.
29. Provision for moral and social development is excellent. The school's behaviour policy clearly sets out expectations and is based firmly on rewards to raise the children's self-esteem and positive reinforcement. All staff demonstrate the differences between right and wrong and use the policy extremely effectively. The staff set very good examples, consistently reinforcing moral values. The school is extremely successful in fostering qualities of tolerance, equality, courtesy and good manners. This is reflected in the school's very good ethos. Children are extremely eager to take on responsibilities and take them very seriously. For example, each day one child is chosen from each group to give out the milk. Several reminded their peers to say 'Thank you' for the milk. At lunchtime older children set the table for lunch, which is a very social occasion. Children sit in family groups and enjoy sharing their meal and chat quietly to each other. During the day, children are provided with many opportunities to work together in pairs or small groups. For example, three children were observed working together to build a house with the large construction equipment and another group was observed cooperating with friends outside when playing on the bus. The children are also involved in charitable fundraising.
30. Cultural provision is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Children are given a very good range of opportunities to celebrate cultural festivals, such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. They find out about the lives and customs of other countries, recently concentrating on Greece, Japan, America and Great Britain. Many parents give their support during these sessions by providing resources and giving cooking demonstrations for the children. At the moment the role-play area is set out as a 'Travel Agents' and children are finding out about places they can go to for their holidays. Music and art provide very good opportunities for cultural development, in particular the activities that the Oxford Philomusica and the artist in residence do with the children. Visitors to the school and well-planned visits in the community successfully extend the provision for cultural awareness.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The support and guidance that children receive, both formal and informal, are very good. Parents appreciate the openness and approachability of staff in dealing with questions and problems, as well as their commitment to the children's learning and development. The teaching and non-teaching staff know the children well and respond to their needs effectively.
32. Procedures for child protection and ensuring children's welfare are very good. They involve staff, parents, governors and outside agencies and extend to the children's families. There is excellent provision for children with special educational needs and very good support for children for whom English is a second language. Overall, the care that children receive remains a strength of the school and has a beneficial effect on their progress and development.
33. The school policies and procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. The few children who display challenging behaviour are well supported and there is no adverse effect on teaching or learning.
34. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are very good and steps have been taken to introduce the same electronic system as other local schools.
35. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good and have improved significantly since the last inspection. Children are assessed during their first term and the data gained from this baseline assessment is used very well to plan the curriculum. There is a very good schedule of assessments for each term and the nursery staff are working extremely hard to introduce a computerised system for recording information. The staff use these assessments regularly to plan for both group and individual activities and to focus on areas for development across the school. Assessments are shared with parents and regularly reviewed. This enables parents to support their children in their learning. There are also very good portfolios of children's achievements in all areas of learning. The Foundation Stage '*stepping stones*' are broken down into small components within each level to ensure accurate assessments. These are used extremely well to assist teachers and nursery nurses in accurately assessing the levels reached by each child. Every child also has an assessment folder, in which individual pieces of work are kept. This is another very good record of individual children's progress.
36. There are good assessment procedures to identify children with special educational needs and they are in line with the most recent guidance and Code of Practice. The breaking down of assessment into smaller steps is helpful to children who make slower progress. Very good liaison with outside professionals ensures that children's needs are fully met. There are also good procedures for assessing and identifying the needs of children who have English as an additional language.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The school's partnership with parents is very effective and remains a strength of the school. Parents who attended the pre-inspection parents' evening and who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in their praise for what the school provides and achieves. Parents agree that they are well informed about children's progress and that the school works closely with them.

38. Parents' contribution to, and involvement with, their children's learning at home and at school are good. Parents and friends, with the dedicated and enthusiastic leadership of a staff governor, raise significant sums of money to supplement the school's budget and are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. The parent governors are enthusiastically involved with many aspects of school activity including child protection, health and safety, special educational needs and information and communication technology.
39. There is very effective communication between the school and parents, with information provided through informal discussion, newsletters, the school notice board, informative curriculum leaflets, parents' meetings and annual reports. The school has recently produced an excellent new school brochure. The children's individual records give parents a clear indication of their progress and personal development.
40. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in the special educational needs process. The targets on the individual educational plans are discussed and reviewed regularly. Parents of children for whom English is an additional language are always welcomed into the nursery and are regularly invited to participate in activities in school.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

41. The headteacher has exceptional vision for the school and her passion for early years provision is enabling her to steer a firm course towards the future. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. A very experienced and dedicated team of teachers and nursery staff support her very well and all involved with the school ensure that the aims of the nursery are fully met. The headteacher is able to confidently delegate roles to members of the team and responsibilities are seamless.
42. The governors are a highly professional group who endorse the vision and direction of the headteacher. They willingly share their professional expertise with the school and fulfil their responsibilities very well. They work closely with the headteacher and staff and are well informed, motivated and involved at a very good level in the life of the school.
43. The headteacher manages the provision for children with special educational needs excellently. She is very experienced and all the paperwork is extremely well organised. The governing body is very well informed about the special educational needs provision in the nursery. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met.
44. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are very good. The nursery has started to collect data on entry and exit and these are now being used very well to evaluate progress and target areas of development for the future. The headteacher and subject coordinators monitor teaching and learning regularly. Recently, governors have also become involved in the process. Feedbacks are made to staff and areas for development included in the school development plan. An appropriate performance management policy is in place and procedures meet statutory requirements. Staff new to the nursery are very well supported and start to feel part of this established team quickly. The school provides a very good centre for the training of new teachers.

45. Financial planning is very closely linked to the needs of the children and supports the identified priorities very well. The headteacher and governors actively seek specific grants, which are very well used to enrich the children's experiences. For example, a significant amount of money has been donated by a number of Oxford colleges and very good use is made of a grant which promotes drugs awareness. The school secretary manages the day-to-day administration of the nursery very effectively and very good use is made of technology to maintain both financial and attendance records.
46. There is a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. All adults are used very well to meet the needs of all the children. However, with the increased numbers of children now in the nursery, at times staff feel over-stretched. The accommodation is barely satisfactory. The areas used for independent activities are spacious and used very well but there are no small teaching areas, parent rooms or withdrawal areas. There are also very high ceilings and poor insulation which makes school frequently too hot or too cold. The outdoor area is a real strength of the nursery and is used very well to develop all areas of learning. Learning resources are adequate in number but although very effective use is made of all, some are rather old and require replacing.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

47. This nursery has no weaknesses.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	15	6	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	71	29	0	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	63
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10 : 1

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13 : 1
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	119,695
Total expenditure	111,431
Expenditure per pupil	2,785
Balance brought forward from previous year	n/a
Balance carried forward to next year	n/a

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 49%

Number of questionnaires sent out	37
Number of questionnaires returned	18

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	100	0	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	17	0	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	61	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	17	0	0	50
The teaching is good.	89	11	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	22	0	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	94	6	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	39	0	0	17
The school works closely with parents.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	89	11	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	17	0	0	28

## **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**

48. Many children enter the nursery with limited personal and social skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage, when children enter Year 1 of the National Curriculum, most have achieved the final stage or '*stepping stone*' of this area of learning. All children, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, are making very good progress in their learning. This is because of very good teaching and a consistent approach by all staff. In the previous report no judgement was made on attainment or the teaching of personal, social and emotional development so no comparison of standards or the quality of teaching can be made.
49. Most children quickly develop effective relationships with each other and with adults in the nursery. An example of this is in the 'Travel Agents' where children play very well together. The vast majority leave their parents or carers happily as they enter nursery and any child who takes a while to settle is very well supported by adults. During group times, the adults encourage the children to take turns to speak and to use their manners. Nursery children are developing these skills very well, although at times are so eager to contribute to discussions that they have to be appropriately reminded of expected behaviour. Reception children are well able to take turns to talk when sitting in a group and, during the inspection, were often heard asking very politely if they may speak. All children have the opportunity to be a 'milk monitor' who gives out the cups of milk to each child. Even the very youngest children know that all are expected to say 'Please' and 'Thank you' for their milk. Older children enjoy setting out the tables for lunch and concentrate very hard when completing this task. Older children sit with younger ones at lunchtime and social skills are developed very well. Most are able to use a knife and fork correctly and to talk sensibly and quietly to each other while eating their lunch.
50. By the end of the Foundation Stage children are well able to co-operate with their friends and to share equipment. For example, children of nursery age worked very well making a bus and were observed deciding where they wanted to go for a ride. With good adult support they decided who would be the bus driver and ticket collector. Another group of nursery age children worked very well together making a house with large bricks. They took turns to place their bricks alongside each other. Reception children work confidently in pairs on activities such as making repeated patterns with pegs and building towers. During review time they learn to appreciate their own work and the work of other children. They are able to do this well. All children are able to help to tidy away equipment and appropriately take care of their environment.
51. The quality of teaching is very good which makes a very positive impact on the children's learning. All staff know the children extremely well and have a very clear awareness of their needs. They keep very detailed observation notes to ensure all children are developing their personal, social and emotional skills appropriately and meet together very regularly to discuss any concerns. They are very good role models for the children and make very good use of praise and encouragement. All have excellent expectations of behaviour and this supports the children's personal and social development extremely well. As a result, all children make very good progress in this area of learning.

52. The coordinator for this area of learning very effectively ensures that all children's needs are fully met. The scheme of work is very good and supports planning for this area of learning very well. Resources are adequate and used very well to promote learning.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

53. Children start nursery with a very broad range of skills in communication, language and literacy. A significant minority of children experience speech problems and have had minimal opportunities to experiment with writing tools and paper. On the other hand, a significant minority of children start nursery with appropriate communication skills and are familiar with storybooks. However, whatever their attainment on entry the children make very good progress throughout their time in the nursery and the vast majority of children reach the expected levels by the time they start Year 1 of the National Curriculum with higher attaining children exceeding the expected levels. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
54. When the children start school most are able to use simple words such as 'me', 'want', 'no' and 'yes' or use body movements to communicate their feelings. For example, they smile, point or shrug their shoulders. As they spend time in the nursery they gradually develop their speech and are able to use questions and statements. This happens when they explain what they would like to do or ask for specific items. As they move in to their reception year they develop the ability to initiate conversations and willingly ask questions during group times. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 of National Curriculum they interact with each other and take turns in conversation. This happened when two older children were observed for an extended period of time playing with two small dolls using a miniature set of dining room furniture and various items of clothes. They took turns to talk, negotiated the storyline and confidently enacted out a home situation.
55. Most children listen to favourite nursery rhymes and stories and are able to join in repeated phrases such as 'Walking through the jungle' and 'Ten in the Bed'. As they progress they start to identify the main characters of books and discuss the events. For example, a mixed group of nursery and reception children clearly identified the bear as the main character in their storybook and expressed concern when he was accidentally taken to the rubbish dump!
56. Children very quickly start to show interest in books and enjoy sharing them with adults individually and within larger groups. They learn which way to hold a book, how to turn pages and older children are able to identify the author and title of the books that they read. As they progress they start to recognise and repeat familiar words. Higher attaining children are able to read favourite books with confidence. During the inspection one above average child read two 'Spot' books with accuracy and developing expressions.
57. When children first start nursery they draw simple pictures to express their feelings. Some children make marks on papers whilst others like to write underneath the work of adults. As children become more confident with paper and writing tools they start to create their 'own writing' and carefully explain to readers what it might say. Higher and average attainers identify initial sounds such as 'm', 'l' and 's'. A significant number of children identify blends such as 'sh' and 'ch'. This helps them write letters, lists and recognise their own name and those of their friends. The children quickly start to use large felt pens and whiteboards to form recognisable letters. They also

successfully 'write' in their style and have a clear understanding that print carries meaning.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Both teachers and nursery staff have a very good understanding of the literacy strategy and provide a very wide range of stimulating activities. These successfully maintain the interest of all children. For example, the use of a hand puppet 'Boris' encourages the children to focus on a particular teaching point and very good use is made of an initiative that encourages the acquisition of the learning of sounds using actions which link with each one. Sessions are briskly paced and all adults are sensitive to the needs of this age group. For instance, children are not expected to sit for long periods of time on the floor but are actively involved in activities. Children are managed very well and there are high expectations of behaviour. The importance of writing in everyday life is also promoted through high quality teaching. This was evident during the inspection when the children were positively encouraged to develop their writing skills by sending letters to an owl called 'Hedwig'. This owl then replied to each individual child and this motivated their learning further.
59. This area of learning is very well managed. The subject manager has a very good overview of teaching throughout the nursery. She has ensured that the policy reflects the views of the staff and has effectively implemented very detailed schemes of work. Very good assessment procedures are in place and these are used well to set targets for each individual child. Resources are very good with a large stock of big picture books, which are used very well to promote learning. Very good use is also made of volunteer readers who regularly share books with the children. The book library is also used very well to develop positive links between home and school.

### **Mathematical development**

60. Many children enter the nursery with well below average attainment in their mathematical development. By the end of the Foundation Stage they are achieving nationally agreed standards for this age group. Standards are similar to those found in the last inspection. All children, including those with special educational needs and children for whom English is an additional language, are making good progress in their learning.
61. Nursery aged children can join in singing number rhymes such as 'Three little ducks went swimming one day' and 'Five little speckled frogs' with adult support. They recognise two gloves, shoes and ears and some can find the second of a pair. Higher attaining children can recognise numbers one to nine and average children can recite numbers to five. Lower attaining children begin to show an interest in counting and with support can count the number of wheels on a vehicle mainly accurately. In the construction area they can identify the big and small bricks and are beginning to make comparisons identifying which ones are bigger or smaller. One girl can see that she needs a smaller brick to fit in the space in the wall. All nursery children are making good progress and are working within the third stage or '*stepping stone*' of this area of learning by the time that they start the reception year.
62. By the time the children are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum most have confidence with numbers. Average attaining children can count reliably to ten, both forwards and backwards, and recognise numerals one to nine. They record and interpret information on a simple graph. For example, they record each child's favourite colour on a graph and know that 'purple is the favourite colour'. Higher

attaining children are working with numbers beyond and work out simple additions and subtractions in their heads. Lower attaining children are able to confidently count to five and are able to join in simple number rhymes. They show an interest in shape and space by making repeated patterns using different coloured pegs. Most children in the reception group can put items in order by length. They know who has made the tallest tower and the shortest tower. They know who has the longest and shortest piece of string. Higher attaining children are beginning to order by size. For example they compare their towers and put them in order from the tallest to the shortest and order four pieces of string from the longest to the shortest. Some children are beginning to 'check' whether they are accurate. They enjoy completing number puzzles. For example, during the inspection one girl was able to explain how she was counting the number of dots on the pillows and matching this with a number on the front of the dolls. This was so that she could put the right doll in the correct place in the bed. She started with ten and worked backwards until all the dolls were in the bed.

63. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. All staff have a good understanding of the mathematics curriculum and are continually finding opportunities to develop children's mathematical language. For example, in the large construction area the teacher was continually finding ways to reinforce the concept of 'big' and 'small' to the children. There is a very good balance of adult led and self-chosen activities. Staff give the children lots of encouragement which makes a positive impact on their learning. They have high expectations of behaviour and as a result children concentrate hard and work well together. The teaching sessions in the reception groups start with good introductions when teachers explain what the children are going to learn. They effectively use parts of the numeracy strategy that are appropriate to the needs of the children. Teachers target individuals well to assess their knowledge and understanding. Support staff are very well deployed to support any child who is finding learning difficult to ensure they can access the same curriculum as the rest of the group. Resources are well organised to support learning and overall classroom management and organisation are good. All adults have high expectations of children's attainment in this area of learning and this has a positive impact on learning.
64. The scheme of work for this area of learning has been carefully planned by the coordinator and has improved since the last inspection. The coordinator has been effective in training and supporting staff in developing their own knowledge and understanding of the mathematics curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. Good use is made of resources, which are satisfactory. Parents and carers are encouraged to borrow mathematical games to play with their child at home and this has a positive impact on their learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

65. Children start nursery with variable experiences of the world around them but overall standards are below the first stage or '*stepping stone*' in the Foundation Stage curriculum. All children make very good progress and reach the expected level by the time that they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. This includes those children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Standards in this area of learning have been maintained since the last inspection.

66. The children start to talk about their experiences shortly after joining the nursery. For example, they recall visits to a local café and discuss what they saw. They show interest in the lives of people close to them, such as their grandparents, and understand that life was different years ago. For instance, they know that trains were different long ago and they understand that music was played on a different machine than that used today. By the time that they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum they have reached the final stage or '*stepping stone*' of the Foundation Stage. They have developed a very good understanding of the difference between past and present and are able to talk about events in the past such as when they were born. The higher attaining children are able to recall the story behind the celebration of Bonfire Night and understand that dinosaurs roamed the earth a very long time ago.
67. The younger children start to recognise features of their local area when they go on local walks and bus rides. They know that there are different types of shops, such as chemists and post offices. As the children progress through the nursery they develop an interest in living things and they start to care for school pets and nurture growing plants. Personal events such as birthday celebrations develop the children's feelings and, as they progress with confidence, they start to discuss family events such as Christmas. The children gain an awareness of other cultural events such as 'Diwali' and this has a positive impact on their spiritual and cultural development.
68. All children make very good progress in their exploration, investigation and design and making skills. For example, they join parts of plastic construction kits together and build with wooden blocks. The children steadily gain confidence using a range of tools and these are used well to create objects from clay, hats from paper and a wide variety of different articles using recycled materials. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum they have reached the final stage of the '*stepping stone*' and are able to build and construct a wide range of objects, using appropriate resources. For example, one child created an animal for 'Noah's Ark' that had a very long neck made out of recycled cardboard tubes.
69. Information and communication technology skills develop very well in the nursery. The children quickly develop an interest in computers and soon learn how to gain control of simple programs by using the 'mouse and pad'. The use of information and communication technology is particularly successful in teaching of children who are using English as an additional language. For example, one child who had little knowledge of English and had only been attending the nursery for a few days was observed confidently following a program that asked which shoe a caterpillar wanted. Another child was observed developing her literacy skills through the use of a toy mobile telephone and she was clearly aware how this form of communication is an important part of everyday life.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching was made in the previous inspection and so no comparison can be made. The children are provided with a very wide range of experiences and this has a very positive impact on their learning experiences. For example, they are given opportunities to celebrate 'May Pole' dancing and enjoy a wide range of cultural experiences such as interactive displays on different cultures, eg Japan, USA and Greece. Resources are used very well to promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills. For instance, the provision of a 'Travel Agency' promotes the children's sense of place through the use of maps, globes and travel brochures. Learning is enhanced by very good teacher interaction that ensures that the children are gain knowledge and skills from these activities. Attitudes are positive and the children are very keen to

be involved. For example, one teacher played alongside the children within the travel agents and this resulted in one child successfully identifying America on the globe and recognising 'the blue areas' on it as sea.

71. This area of learning is very well co-ordinated and a detailed policy and comprehensive schemes of work have been developed. Regular assessments are made of the children's development and these are used to inform further planning. Resources are satisfactory and are very well used.

### **Physical development**

72. Standards are below the first stage or '*stepping stone*' when children start the nursery but by the time they start Year 1 of the National Curriculum they have achieved the final stage or '*stepping stone*' of the Foundation Stage curriculum. A significant minority of children exceed the nationally recommended goals in this area of learning. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection.
73. Children start with little knowledge of spacial awareness but make very good progress. After a short time in nursery the children quickly achieve the first stage or '*stepping stone*' of the Foundation Stage. For example, they learn to move spontaneously and stop when required to do so. They enjoy listening to music and use their body to respond to music. Older children learn to climb over and under poles. They scramble up ropes and travel over up-turned crates in this. They successfully climb planks of wood and show appropriate balancing techniques. Children also develop their physical skills using tricycles; the younger children concentrate hard on their pedalling skills whilst the older ones successfully steer the wheeled vehicles around a track as their skills develop. Very good progress is made and most children comfortably reach the final stage or '*stepping stone*' and are able to safely move both inside and outdoors using their imagination.
74. When the children first start nursery most are unaware of the importance of health matters. They have no understanding of the need to wash their hands and require adult support to ensure that this happens appropriately. However, they make very good progress. They learn to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and understand what factors are important for this to be maintained.
75. Children start to use small equipment appropriately. They children learn to use paintbrushes, small wooden bricks and enjoy playing with toy cars on a road map. The children progress to 'buttoning up' their clothes and using zippers. Older children successfully create articles from recycled materials and plastic construction kits. Hoops and plastic hockey sticks are used very successfully outside.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when a number of unsatisfactory sessions were observed in physical development. Teachers and nursery nurses have a very good understanding of the skills that need to be developed and they interact very positively with the children. For example, adults take part in the role play outdoors and this has a very good impact on the acquisition of the children's knowledge skills and understanding. Expectations of behaviour are very high and children clearly understand accepted procedures. They are eager and always willing to participate. Adults make very good use of all available resources and high quality links are made with other areas of learning. For instance, the children were observed pretending to be firemen climbing up a ladder to put out a fire. The teacher involved in this activity encouraged the

children to talk about their play and this promoted their communication and language skills.

77. This area of learning has a new coordinator who has already identified an action plan for the future. Regular assessments are made of the children's physical development and these are used to inform further planning. Resources are good and are very well used.

### **Creative development**

78. Children enter nursery with standards in creative development, which are well below that expected for three and a half year olds. By the time they enter Year 1 of the National Curriculum, they are achieving the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Progress is very good because of very good teaching and this impacts very well on learning. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
79. Nursery children make simple models of animals, folding and sticking to connect pieces. They recognise some colours and explore with paint. They are beginning to use scissors well to cut the materials. The children confidently play with the large and small construction kits and are beginning to construct enclosures and create spaces by stacking blocks vertically and horizontally. For example, one group of girls made a goal for their dolls because they 'had been naughty'. Other groups of young children play imaginatively with the train set. In the role-play area, with support from adults and older children, they begin to develop their imaginative skills well. They use the large equipment outdoors to build such objects as a bus and use their imagination very well when deciding that the bus is 'going to London'.
80. Older reception children recognise and name primary colours. They select the materials needed to make a three-dimensional model of an animal. For example, one child was observed confidently selecting two bottle tops and explained clearly that they were for the animals' eyes. Other children were observed making models of Noah's Ark. During this activity they joined materials together using a range of techniques that included gluing and using sticky tape. Most of the children were able to select the appropriate colours to paint their animals. Children confidently roll, mould and squeeze clay into shapes to make models. This happened when one child was observed making a boat for her friends to go in. The older reception children make good progress with their drawing skills and this was clearly evident when they were able to create attractive Rangoli patterns at Diwali. Average and higher attaining children make good observational drawings of plastic models, such as using pastels to make pictures of dinosaurs. They satisfactorily explore the texture of objects and are gradually developing an awareness of different shapes and form. For example, children create pictures using natural materials such as autumn leaves. In role play the older children use their imagination very well such as when they visit a 'Travel Agents' and prepare to go on their holidays.
81. When the children first start nursery they are able to join in favourite songs. For example, the younger children successfully joined in singing songs associated with different types of animals. They rapidly begin to build up a repertoire of well-known songs and enjoy moving to different types of music. By the time they are ready to move on to Year 1 of the National Curriculum they experiment freely with different types of musical instruments and understand the difference between sounds. For instance, a group of reception-aged children were experimenting with a range of percussion instruments and were able to tell the difference between loud and soft noises.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Good atmospheres are created at the start of group sessions. Music is often playing to calm the children and to prepare them for the session. All adults have high expectations of behaviour and this impacts very well on children's learning. They use skilful questioning to develop the children's imagination and interest. All adults provide individuals with very clear demonstrations of skills development and instructions. For example, one adult carefully supported a child when she was using scissors and she demonstrated very well how to use the scissors. A very good range of resources is organised to stimulate the children. For instance, non-fiction books, models of animals and a Noah's Ark were used to support them with making their models of animals. This made a very positive impact on learning.
83. There is a very good scheme of work for creative development, which supports staff very well with their planning. This area of learning is managed very well. Planning is effectively monitored and children's work carefully recorded. There are sufficient resources to support the children's learning and these are enhanced by visitors to school, such as artists in residence and the Oxford Philomusica.