

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLOW NURSERY SCHOOL

Dunstable

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109415

Headteacher: Mrs A Goodridge

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Coyle
20603

Dates of inspection: 13 – 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 230349

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 Children:	3 – 5 years
Gender of Children:	Mixed
School address:	Goldstone Crescent Dunstable Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU5 4QU
Telephone number:	01582 662600
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Appropriate authority:	Bedfordshire Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Shelley
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20603	Mrs A Coyle	Registered Inspector	Communication, language & literacy Creative development Physical development English as an additional language Equal opportunities	How high are the standards? How well are the children taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8992	Mr J Vischer	Lay Inspector		How well does the school care for the children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24031	Mrs I Idle	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Special educational needs	How good are the curricular, and other opportunities, offered to children?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Children's attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and children's achievements	
Children's attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO CHILDREN?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR THE CHILDREN?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Willow Nursery School is situated in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. It serves the surrounding catchment area, which mainly consists of families from privately owned properties. The number of children on roll is similar to when it was last inspected in 1998; there is currently a full-time equivalent number of 35 girls and boys, all of whom are between the ages of three and five years. This number is due to rise with the spring intake. Children are admitted to the school on a part-time basis when they are three years old; the vast majority are currently between the ages of three and four years old. Attainment on entry varies, but it is in line with the expected levels, overall. Seven per cent of children are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and apart from English, the main languages spoken at home are Gujarati, Urdu, Tamil and French. Very few children are known to be eligible for free school meals and the school has seven children on the register of special educational needs, including those who have a statement for their needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good nursery school in which the children make good progress overall and achieve good standards. It provides a warm, welcoming and caring learning environment where children are taught well by a hard working team of dedicated staff. The school is managed well by the headteacher who promotes a happy, stimulating environment for the children and ensures that sound value for money is achieved.

What the school does well

- Children achieve good standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They achieve very good standards in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Attitudes to learning are very good; children relate well to others and they behave well.
- The quality of teaching is good; all staff work well as a team and manage the children very well.
- A good curriculum is provided that includes an effective balance of activities and very good provision for developing children's moral and social awareness.
- The school has good links with parents and the local community.
- The leadership of the school is good; the headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher and all members of staff.

What could be improved

- The strategic role of the governing body is not as well developed as it could be in monitoring the school's provision.

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 improved well since its last inspection in 1998. Staff have developed the daily planning of activities to include an effective balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and multicultural links. The procedures for, and use of, assessment are now good; teachers make focused observations of children working together and record the information carefully so that it can be used to help staff plan future activities for individuals and groups of children. The school has developed its monitoring procedures to a satisfactory level; staff regularly evaluate their work. Overall, the school's capacity for future improvement is sound because it is effectively led and managed.

STANDARDS

The school has maintained the standards reported at the last inspection. Children in the Foundation Stage¹ currently attain good standards in all the areas of learning, and the majority exceed many of the Early Learning Goals² by the time they leave in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. They attain very good standards in personal, social and emotional development.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children show good interest and involvement in activities.
Behaviour	Good. Children behave well during indoor and outdoor play.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. All children relate well to each other and play together happily.
Attendance	Good. Children are keen to attend the nursery and do so punctually.

Children's relationships with each other, and with adults, are a strength of the nursery.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good almost all of the time; it is never less than satisfactory. Teachers and nursery nurses have secure knowledge of the six areas of learning. A particular strength of teaching is that all adults work together well as a team and make good use of praise to encourage the children. Practical activities are purposeful and staff employ questioning techniques skillfully to challenge and extend the most capable children. Plenty of well-structured, planned opportunities are given to children to help them use their literacy and numeracy skills, especially as they draw near to transfer to the lower school. All teachers and nursery nurses provide good displays of children's colourful artwork and the classrooms are bright and cheerful places, with plenty of exciting photographs of children at work and at play.

¹ **FOUNDATION STAGE** - this stage of learning refers to children aged between three and six years.

² **ON EARLY LEARNING GOALS** - from September 2000, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), have introduced a set of 'Early Learning Goals for children's learning'. These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six in the areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal, social and emotional development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is organised well to provide a suitable balance of activities led by adults and those children chose for themselves.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. The school responds appropriately to the Code of Practice ³ for these children.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. Children are integrated well in activities and supported well by staff.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Children's moral and social development is particularly well promoted.
How well the school cares for its children	Good. Children are cared for well in a warm and welcoming environment.

A well-balanced curriculum is offered that fully meets the requirements of the Early Learning Goals. The school has good partnerships with parents and the local community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The nursery is effectively led and managed by the headteacher who is supported well by her staff and the deputy headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are fully supportive of the nursery school, although their monitoring roles are not yet fully developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The nursery evaluates much of its work effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. All resources are deployed appropriately and sound value for money is achieved.

The nursery is effectively led and managed overall.

³ **Code of Practice** – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like coming to the nursery.• The staff are helpful and approachable.• Children make good progress.• Teaching is good.• The school is led and managed well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No significant concerns.

The inspection findings support all of the above views expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

1. Since the last inspection, the nursery school has maintained the standards attained by children. The good provision for children aged between three and five years enables them to make good progress overall. Entry assessments, conducted when the children first begin nursery education, indicate that their competency and confidence with language, mathematical and social skills are in line with those expected for their age. The children are provided with a good start to their learning and most develop their skills well in all the areas of learning.
2. All children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and they exceed the expectations by the time they are five. This is because teachers and nursery nurses have high expectations and place a strong emphasis on developing children's skills. Since the previous inspection, the nursery has made improvements in promoting children's development by extending the resources for the outdoor areas to facilitate children's social skills through play.
3. Standards in communication, language and literacy exceed the expectations by the time the children are five years old. They make good progress because teachers focus effectively on promoting this area, and there are plenty of planned opportunities to extend the oldest and most capable four year olds to prepare them for entry to the lower school. Children pay good attention to adults and listen when being given instructions and guidance on their activities. Speaking skills are developed well and many children exhibit confident use of language.
4. Children make good progress in mathematical development. By the time they are ready to leave the nursery school, children are confident in their use of numbers and many exceed the expectations for their age. They enjoy the regular opportunities provided for learning number rhymes and songs and they make good progress in counting in sequence to five, and sometimes beyond. With help, they can identify simple shapes, such as circles and squares. Most children understand fully the value of numbers, and the most capable achieve well in this aspect because there are many planned opportunities for them to use numbers in daily activities.
5. Children often exceed the expected standards for their age in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. They investigate objects and materials, using all their senses, and show great delight when tasting their own freshly prepared stir-fry vegetables. Children develop their observational skills well. They are eager to find out about runner beans as they watch the roots form and the bean shoots begin to grow. They understand how materials such as flour and water change when making their own play dough, and many opportunities are provided for them to build and construct models, pedal tricycles, and take part in imaginative outdoor activities in the play house and model caravan. Children make good progress in artistic and musical activities. For example, they enjoy painting and three-dimensional work, and are able to mix primary colours together successfully, showing great delight at their imaginative and highly colourful results.
6. The school successfully strives to raise the standard of achievement for all children with special educational needs. Systems are in place to assess learning difficulties

and the information gathered is used well to help staff set appropriate targets for individual children. Children with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress and they are integrated well in all activities.

Children's attitudes, values and personal development

7. Children have very positive attitudes to school, which is similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection. They are keen to join in and take a delight in the broad range of activities that are offered to them. Children show interest in their learning, concentrate well and demonstrate a high level of independence. They take pride in being members of a caring school community that values the whole person. For example, children with English as an additional language and those on the special educational needs register are relaxed and feel quite at home. Boys and girls are confident, and feel comfortable with school routines.
8. Behaviour is good in and around the school and in lessons. Children show a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They play well together and respect each other's space. For example, during playtime one child, momentarily distracted, drove a bike into the back of another accidentally but with some force; the injured party did not take offence and, after a few puzzled looks, they both burst into laughter. There were no incidents of bullying noted during the inspection.
9. Relationships are very positive between children and between staff and children. This is reflected in the easy co-operation shown generally by children role playing together in the sandpit and outdoor area, especially when staff slip in and out of character unnoticeably between different groups of children. Because of these positive relationships, children feel secure and are self-confident. They are happy to take the initiative and are willing to take on responsibilities; a good example is the willingness with which they put away play equipment at the end of playtime. The early years support service works closely with the school so that children with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life.
10. Levels of attendance are good. Children come to school on time within a flexible arrangement for the start of each morning and afternoon session.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

11. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved well. It is currently good overall in all areas of learning, and never less than satisfactory.
12. The quality of teaching and learning in personal, social and emotional development is consistently good. All staff involved with the children throughout the nursery school have a clear understanding of the needs of this age group and plan a wide variety of opportunities for the children to develop their skills. The children enjoy the activities, which contribute to their growing levels of confidence and joy in learning. All children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language learn well and make equally good progress in relation to their prior attainment, building particularly well on their social skills.
13. Teaching and learning in communication, language and literacy are good. Teachers have good knowledge of the children they teach and the consistent reinforcement of basic skills, the high expectations, combined with the pace and stimulating content of activities, ensure all children make maximum gains in their learning. They undertake

work which makes increasing demands on their skills, knowledge and understanding and they practise and refine these, constantly improving previous standards through topics such as *'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'* and, *'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'*. One of the main strengths is the good attention paid to the development of vocabulary. Literacy has a high focus on the curriculum and opportunities to reinforce vocabulary and extend language are seized in many activities. For example, children are taught to communicate scientifically using the precise technical language when observing the rate of growth of runner beans.

14. Basic mathematical skills and numeracy are taught well. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour, attention and standards. Good use is made of time to extend children's knowledge and understanding of number. For example, staff encourage children to set problems for others when using the abacus, and they provide useful opportunities for children to count forwards and backwards when taking daily registers.
15. Very effective questioning helps to deepen children's knowledge and understanding of the world and computers are used well to support learning across the curriculum. For example, teachers provide exciting computer programs for children to move a given number of frogs into a pond and then identify the correct number to match their frogs. Children are taught well in creative and physical activities; staff guide children's directional skills when using computer images and wheeled toys to move left, right, forward and back.
16. Planning is good and identifies learning intentions clearly. This has been improved since the previous inspection through the introduction of planning based closely on the Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Much development goes on in planning meetings, which are held regularly. All staff are involved in these sessions and this all adds to the good quality of the teaching. Teachers contribute by offering their specialist knowledge and there is plenty of opportunity to debate and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers assess children's work thoroughly in all areas and the assessments are used well to provide support for children to overcome difficulties.
17. The management of children is very good and the strategies to improve behaviour are firmly enforced. This ensures that every minute of each session is used productively. Teachers promote a classroom atmosphere that encourages a conscientious work ethos and enjoyment of learning. Children listen attentively to the advice given so that constructive criticism leads to a discernible change for the better. Children are challenged and guided well to improve their work.
18. Nursery nurses and learning support assistants are well deployed and they work in good partnership with teachers. They know what they are expected to do and they enable children to make good progress. They are well trained and prepared, and they make a positive contribution to the quality of children's learning.
19. All teachers and members of support staff provide a good level of support that effectively contributes to the achievement of children with special educational needs. The support is flexible and is adjusted depending on individual needs. This makes a positive contribution to the good rate of progress children make in their learning. Teachers' organisation and planning for children with special educational needs are good. Children are helped sensitively by the staff in the classroom and additional support is provided for children with particular difficulties.

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

20. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. This provision gives the children a good start to their education. All children including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have full and equal access to the curriculum at their own level and based on their individual needs. The nursery staff plan their work across two years to ensure that all children receive a good, balanced curriculum. Their planning shows a clear focus on the Early Learning Goals and covers all six areas of learning. Since the previous inspection, the role of subject co-ordinators has developed and planning now clearly shows what the teachers want children to know and understand. Two teachers are undertaking further training to develop children's thinking skills and this is having a positive impact on children's learning. There is a very good approach to the development of children's personal, social and emotional development and this is a strength of the school. Careful consideration has been taken to ensure that children's understanding of multicultural issues are developed and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The staff are strong role models, working happily as a team with all the children and other helpers and visitors to the school.
21. The provision for children with special educational needs is good. Many children come as priority admissions to the nursery and early assessment of all children's needs means that any difficulties are identified at a very early stage and strategies are put in place to give good support. The school has implemented the new Code of Practice, and records of children's progress are well documented. Parents are fully involved and receive good support from the specialist services. The policy has been redrafted with the help of the local education authority and there is a need to update the handbook for parents with regard to children with special educational needs.
22. The curricular provision for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good. The decision to place the library near the entrance successfully encourages children under the age of three, and their parents, to look at books. Children also take books home on a regular basis and this encourages their interest and the development of their early literacy skills. Children learn about mathematics in a variety of meaningful ways as a result of teachers' good planning. The co-ordinator knows this area of learning well and a wide range of activities are available, both to use in a small group with an adult and to allow children to have the responsibility to select their own activities. Good assessment procedures are in place and teachers match their approach and tasks in this area of learning closely to the needs of individual children.
23. The contribution of the community to children's learning is good. A strong emphasis is placed on broadening children's experiences by visits in the local community and wider. For example, the whole school visits Whipsnade Zoo each year, and children also see a wide range of churches including a mosque, Sikh temple, a Buddhist monastery and a number of Christian churches. A local minister talks to the children regularly and they also go to church for Christmas services. Parents come into the nursery school to talk about their work when the children learn about 'People who help us.' The friends' association holds fund-raising events to raise considerable sums of money for additional resources, and also pay for a Christmas entertainer and gifts for the children.
24. Relationships with partner institutions are good. The headteacher is on the management committee of a local playgroup. Children from these playgroups

virtually all come to the nursery school. The headteachers of local schools meet each term and agree arrangements for transfer of children. Parents have a choice of which lower school their children attend. When visits have been made and decisions taken, parents discuss the records for their child with the nursery staff before they are passed to the lower school. Teachers from the lower schools visit the nursery to share information and discuss individual records. These records are linked closely to the Early Learning Goals to ensure ease of progression into the reception classes.

25. There is good provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for children's spiritual development is good. The staff create learning opportunities that excite and amaze the children, leaving them with a sense of awe and wonder. For example, the children were amazed to watch the chickens begin to emerge from their eggs in the incubator and shout '*Woo-ee, look at this!*' when they successfully make 'The Three Bears' bed. Teachers encourage children to express their feelings and those of the characters in the stories they hear. They confidently describe Goldilocks as 'feeling sad' and 'wanting to cry' when she had broken baby bear's chair. Teachers use the children's natural curiosity in things around them to develop a sense of wonder, for example, by watching the school's budgerigar's antics and watching the bean seeds grow.
26. The provision for children's moral development is very good. The values of consideration for others are actively promoted. All children are taught right from wrong in an ethos of care and support. They see their teachers working well together and this helps them to work in similar ways. Relationships with all adults, parents and children are very good and these help children to become confident and independent. The ethos of the school encourages children to care for the feelings of others and the need to care for resources and creatures in school. For example, when sharing books with the teacher, children were told that 'books are special and we need to look after them.'
27. The provision for children's social development is very good. Opportunities such as sharing a snack together give children confidence to sit with a group and chatter as they eat their snack. The social development of individual children is closely monitored and support is readily available if needed. The adults seek every opportunity to raise children's self-confidence and self-esteem through the sharing of different events such as birthdays and festivals.
28. The provision for children's cultural development is good. The nursery school has focused carefully on providing appropriate pictures, books and resources to develop children's understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Parents of children with English as an additional language have made number signs to ten in Urdu and Tamil for the number display. All staff have visited mosques, temples and a Buddhist monastery prior to taking the children. Children are encouraged to listen to a range of pieces of music and play their percussion instruments in time to the music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR THE CHILDREN?

29. The nursery school takes good care of its children. It offers a safe environment for children to learn and play. Since the last inspection the procedures for health and safety and first aid have improved, and are now good. Children are offered good role models by all staff in developing relationships and showing respect for one another's efforts. There are very well monitored health and safety procedures and all staff are trained in the application of first aid. There are good procedures for child protection and the site is secure.

30. The staff monitor and promote good behaviour well. Children are encouraged to behave well by a simple and straightforward approach, which is also helpfully laid out in the parents' pack. This is consistently applied and thoroughly understood by all members of staff. It is shared with parents as soon as their children join the school and parents are encouraged to play an active part in maintaining high expectations of behaviour throughout the time that their child is at the nursery school. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good. Procedures for the monitoring of children settling in are well practised and involve the active participation of parents. A positive approach to transfer arrangements ensures children are well-supported when moving on to the lower school.
31. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance. Children are registered on arrival in their 'home-base' classroom when parents may also share any information with the member of staff present. Absences are followed up appropriately with phone calls. There are good links to the education welfare officer. Latecomers have to ring the bell to gain access although a suitably wide margin for arrival is allowed.
32. Educational and personal support for children are good. Clear procedures are used effectively to assess children's attainment and progress, and the information is used well by staff to help guide their planning. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well to ensure that they make equally good progress as their peers, and there are good links between the support teacher and the co-ordinator. Relationships with outside agencies are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Parents expressed very positive views about the nursery school when responding to the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting. Parents appreciate the way the school always makes them feel welcome and the way it is ready to discuss their child's progress at any time. They also appreciate how quickly their child becomes self-disciplined and self-reliant. These views reflect the positive and open approach the school has towards parents, which is very much an integral part of school life.
34. The nursery school has very effective links with parents and provides good quality information for them. The 'parents' pack' is comprehensive. It encourages the involvement of parents in the school and emphasises the importance of the parental contribution to learning. Parents are given clear details about school issues and events in the headteacher's numbered newsletters that are simple and brief. The school has provided a large notice board in the entrance hall which parents can see when they arrive. This offers a variety of information for parents, from parent support groups to forthcoming Friends' fund-raising events. Parents' evenings are very valued; they offer parents clear and detailed feedback on their child's progress and all records are freely available for parents to see. Each child's profile offers a useful Record of Achievement and provides good information for parents on their child's progress at the end of the year. A copy is offered for parents to keep. Parents' views are regularly canvassed on their experience of the school through annual questionnaires. The responses are analysed and the school knows how its provision for parents can be improved. The governors' annual report to parents has a few minor omissions relating to the area of special educational needs.
35. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. The school's very effective open-door strategy, which includes open days, makes parents feel at ease and many new parents feel encouraged to have a go at helping in the classroom. There are a number of regular helpers who make a very effective

contribution. They come in to school to help with learning activities and to help with the organisation of resources which make learning more effective. Most parents accompany their children on the annual school trip to Whipsnade Zoo. The successful Friends of Willow, a registered charity which includes ex-parents, is very active in supporting the school. Spending priorities are determined in conjunction with the headteacher but the final decisions are left to the Friends. Substantial funds have been raised and used to purchase several items such as the excellent outdoor play equipment.

36. There are good links with the parents of children with special educational needs. Lots of discussion takes place to ensure that children receive the best support possible. Parents are involved in the action plans for their children and in any reviews.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. She receives good support from the deputy headteacher and all staff. Under her guidance, staff work well together as a caring team, committed to the welfare of the children. All adults consistently promote equality of opportunity for the children and the school provides good support for children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The school is managed well with a clear sense of purpose and, as a result, standards and provision are good. The school is a lively and caring community, in which the stated aims are consistently reflected in the daily work and children are constantly encouraged to be thoughtful and show respect for others.
38. A useful three-year school improvement plan is in place that provides broad details of how the school will improve the curriculum, management, personnel and resources, and the environment. It is supplemented satisfactorily with a one-year plan that focuses on the school's main priorities of developing its performance management policy, increasing links with the local community, participating in the local education authority's financial management scheme, and continuing to implement the Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Although the plan is not fully costed, all staff and governors have been consulted in the production of this plan and this is used to determine the focus of in-service training and the use of school resources.
39. Since the last inspection, the introduction of a new monitoring policy and procedures now ensures that regular monitoring of teaching and learning is planned. There are sound systems in place for school self-evaluation and for continuous school improvement. The headteacher, supported by other members of staff, regularly monitors the rate of children's progress and the standards attained and she adapts staffing and provision suitably to ensure continued improvement in these areas. The headteacher also monitors teaching and she is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Procedures for performance management and professional development have recently been introduced satisfactorily. The provision of in-service training is carefully targeted to address identified individual training needs. This is well managed and staff are very positive about the levels of professional support and development that they receive.
40. The governing body meets regularly to oversee the work of the school. They are active in supporting its improvement and the governors are committed to the future success of the school. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher on a regular basis and the governors' committee structure has been well established and

generally works effectively. However, the role of the governors is not fully developed to ensure increased monitoring and evaluation of the school's strategic development, especially in the light of the school's current financial changes. Nevertheless, the governors fulfil their duties effectively and the school's capacity for further improvement is sound.

41. There is a sufficient number of teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants. They are all well qualified and all benefit from good arrangements for induction, appraisal and professional development. The school places a high priority on the additional support given to children and the number of support staff employed is good. They are well supported and deployed and are making a significant contribution to the raising of standards in the school. Roles and responsibilities have been allocated so that there is a clear line management and responsibility for the areas of learning and aspects of management. Over recent years, several staff changes have been made and teachers have benefited from the opportunities provided to follow an appropriate range of professional development. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching so that the children now have good quality learning experiences throughout the school.
42. The school's good accommodation is clean and well maintained by the premises staff. Classrooms have good space and allow for whole-class teaching or group work to progress well. Plans are in place to extend the accommodation to include a fourth classroom. The building is completely accessible to children with disabilities. The lunchtime supervision and catering staff make a good contribution to the life of the school.
43. The level of resourcing across the school is good. The quality and quantity of resources, including learning materials produced by the teaching staff, are good and contribute to the standards of education and the achievements of the children.
44. The procedures for financial management are secure, and sound value for money is obtained. The school has a partially devolved budget from the local education authority, which it manages satisfactorily. Appropriate funding is allocated to resources and staff training. The school is currently involved in a pilot scheme by which it will receive more financial autonomy from the local education authority, and this change is being overseen carefully by the headteacher. Copies of budget spending statements are now regularly being reviewed by the governors.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. The headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - (1) strengthen and develop the strategic role of the governing body to include regular monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision. (*paragraph 40*)

In addition, there is a minor area for improvement. This is indicated in paragraph 36 and relates to the need to ensure that up-to-date information on special educational needs is included in the governors' annual report to parents.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	15	1	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	94	6	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 approximately six percentage points.

Information about the school's children

Children on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	35
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	7

English as an additional language

	No of Children
Number of children with English as an additional language	4

Child mobility in the last school year

	No of Children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

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)	3
Number of children per qualified teacher	12

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	104

Number of children per FTE adult	7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	173,511
Total expenditure	171,035
Expenditure per child	3,167
Balance brought forward from previous year	800
Balance carried forward to next year	3,276

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	94
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	8	8	4	4	77
The teaching is good.	88	12	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	35	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	50	0	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	73	23	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	15	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	23	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	12	4	0	58

Other issues raised by parents

Five parents attended a meeting held at the school and one parent wrote to the registered inspector. Parents took the opportunity to express their satisfaction with the quality of education offered by the school and there were no significant concerns.

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

46. Children enter the nursery with satisfactory personal, social and emotional skills but they make very good progress and achieve very good standards by the time they leave. The nursery staff place a clear emphasis on this aspect of learning as soon as the children start. As a result of the good teaching, children are very keen to be involved in all the activities offered and concentrate for good periods of time. Their behaviour is good at all times and they establish very good relationships quickly with adults and other children. All the children quickly settle into the well-established routines in the nursery. Although many of the children have only been in the nursery school for a short time, they are confident to respond when their name is called during registration. They understand the routines as they come into the classrooms and collect their card from their own folders and place this on their milk carton. They show a high level of independence when moving from registration to other rooms for activities and also when putting their coats on and fastening them for outdoor play.
47. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Relationships between adults and children are very good and this helps to promote high standards in their personal, social and emotional development. The calm, quiet approach of all the team of nursery staff encourages children to respond well by settling to activities without fussing. Whilst working, they interact well together and are polite, respectful and confident. Since the last inspection, planning has improved to now include good activities to develop children's social skills. For example, food is provided for them to make their own sandwiches, they help each other and they sit in a small group and chatter together happily. In story times, most of the children offer their own ideas and all the children listen very carefully while others are talking. They take turns well when they play 'lotto' type games matching patterns on teddies. The children who stay for lunch show a very high standard of independence and skills when they eat. They use knives, forks and spoons skilfully and are able to cut up their own food. They clear away very well. For example, they scrape any uneaten food into a bowl, put cutlery into appropriate plastic boxes and pile up the plates. All the staff act as good role models and set high expectations at all times. The success of their work can be seen in the good behaviour, independence and confidence shown by the children.

Communication, language and literacy

48. The good standards recognised at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The majority of children are likely to exceed the expected outcomes in communication, language and literacy by the time they leave. All adults take every opportunity to develop these skills and, as a result, the children make good progress. All the staff continually introduce and reinforce new vocabulary. Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress in acquiring skills due to the effective support from all the staff.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers teach the beginnings of literacy well and introduce the children to a suitable selection of children's literature in their topics. They use support staff and resources well, and children are provided with daily sessions when they share texts.. For example, children are introduced to

the early stages of literacy through an enjoyment of books and stories such as, 'Goldilocks', 'Threadbear', 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' and 'Where is Marmaduke?'. They can change books and take them home to share with parents and carers. Most children handle books carefully, hold them the correct way up and turn pages. Teachers and nursery nurses regularly draw groups of children together and talk to them about stories. They provide close support to help the children to write about the three bears. While their writing consists of pencil marks on the paper, they are interspersed with letters. Some children can read their marks aloud to an adult confidently. All adults have good relationships with the children and they manage them very well. As a result, the children try hard to succeed, want to please the adults and work hard. They are interested, concentrate and behave well and have very positive attitudes to school. The adults make good assessments of children's progress during activities and use their good knowledge of individuals to intervene when appropriate to support learning. The good system for tracking the progress of each child is used to assist planning for individual children and for groups. While activities are available for all children, the adults challenge the more capable by targeting suitable questions at their level to promote learning.

Mathematical development

50. Children make good progress and achieve well. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained. The youngest children are able to count together the number of children in their class each day, whilst the oldest children successfully use numbers to add or subtract. Good use is made of time to extend their knowledge and understanding of number. For example, at the end of the session they are encouraged to find out, 'How many girls are left?' and 'How many boys have we got now?' and 'How many altogether?' Many of the children count to ten confidently and beyond and recognise numbers to ten. For example, they use a computer program successfully to move a given number of frogs into a pond and then identify the correct number to match their frogs. Children develop directional skills when making an image move left, right, up, down on the computer screen. Children set problems for others when using the abacus: One child asked another to, 'Get four beads to the other side' after counting ten beads in the row. He then asked how many were left. The answer was given correctly and cheered by his friend.
51. Children recognise the shape of a circle, square, rectangle and triangle and identify and match colours successfully. They use shapes very successfully to create the face of a clown in their creative activities. During the inspection the theme for the week was 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears.' Children clearly understand the difference between little, middle and big when comparing the bears' three beds, chairs, and bowls. Children match accurately the cover and pillow to each bed and match the correct bowl to each bear. They understand that all the legs have to be the same length when they make their box models of the bears' beds and use one leg as the measure for the others. Good planning and teaching extend children's knowledge by encouraging them to think about 'big', 'bigger' and 'biggest', 'small', 'smaller' and 'smallest'. The teaching of mathematical language is good; children are developing their use of mathematical language in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in their water play they fill bottles with water but do not talk about the 'big, middle or small bottle' or link it to their work about 'The Three Bears.'

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world develop through a wide range of activities that encourage them to pay attention and show an interest in what is

happening around them. Children make good progress in developing these skills and are likely to exceed the expectations by the time they leave. As a result of good teaching, children learn to use simple tools well to make box model beds and tables for *'The Three Bears'*. They hold the wood carefully in a vice while they cut it with a small hacksaw. They understand the need to take care and the importance of all the legs being the same length. The good provision of a range of manufactured construction kits allows children to create their own imaginary models. Two boys really enjoyed singing *'Bob the Builder'* as they made their tower with large blocks. Children selected their own collectable materials well to make a backpack when pretending to be an action man and made a robot using cardboard boxes and lots of sticky tape.

53. Teachers have improved their planning since the last inspection to include a good balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by children. They plan carefully to develop children's information and communication technology skills and the majority of children control the mouse well. The youngest children use the mouse successfully to select an object from one side of the screen and place it in the pond opposite. They use arrow keys very well to take an image through a maze. A tool kit is linked to one computer program and this enables children to construct bridges and buildings, selecting and using the appropriate tool for the task. They listen to the sound the tool makes as it drills holes and sprays paint. The children learn how to prepare sandwiches for snack time and develop an understanding of healthy eating when preparing and tasting a range of vegetables. They also understand the need for clean hands when working with food. Good opportunities are provided for children to understand how materials change. When making their own play dough, children commented that when water was added, *'It smells like porridge'* and that it had to go into the microwave oven, *'To change into play dough'*. Children develop their observational skills well when they plant their own bean in a transparent container. They watch the roots form and the bean shoot grow. They learn about the work of others when a health visitor comes into the nursery to talk about her work and they visit the local shops to see people at work. Children develop an awareness of the culture of others by working with multicultural jigsaws and dressing in other national costumes in their role-play activities. They visit the local mosque, a Buddhist temple and learn about the Chinese New Year. They visit another school for Eid celebrations and share the food and drink.

Physical development

54. The children achieve well and they are on course to exceed the standards expected by the time they leave. This finding is similar to that of the previous inspection when standards were also found to be good. The range and challenge of the outdoor activities presented to the children are of high quality and the children make good progress. Children's manipulative skills are good in that they handle pencils, crayons and scissors with increasing co-ordination. They use glue sticks and paint rollers confidently and with control. Children use construction sets sensibly; they share and take turns which supports their social skills. The children are provided with many opportunities to cut and stick, paint, explore sand and water and handle 'small world' objects, such as model trees, dolls and puppets. When using the large equipment, the children get on and off sensibly and correctly. They use alternate feet to climb and they move along, over or through the apparatus with increasing skill. They use the space well and are aware of themselves and others. They move around with increasing control and can balance on one foot, change direction and speed with some skill. They are aware of changes to their bodies when they take part in strenuous activity. The children particularly enjoy playing games with the staff such

as, *'What's the Time, Mr Wolf?'*

55. Teaching and learning are good. The adults have positive relationships with the children and manage them very well. As a result, the children derive great enjoyment from their physical activities; they try hard to succeed, are interested, concentrate well for their age and work independently. Children with special educational needs learn well due to the good support from all staff. There is a good ratio of adults to children and staff provide a wide range of daily activities both indoors and outside using small and large equipment. The equipment available for the children is extensive and there is a good amount of space for the children to move around safely. The adults work enthusiastically with the children, challenge them to improve their skills, ensure their safety and see that they use the equipment sensibly. All staff function as a good team and children receive good individual support. Adults intervene at appropriate times to teach and reinforce skills to those children who need it.

Creative development

56. Children make good progress and are on course to exceed the expectations by the time they leave. The good standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The children are provided with frequent opportunities to use paint in different ways, to cut and stick materials for collage pictures and models, for singing songs and role-play. Children find enjoyment in expressing their feelings and ideas through a range of experiences in artistic, musical and imaginative play. For example, they enjoy painting and making prints, showing great excitement and wonder at the end product, especially when mixing primary colours together and when making celebration cards for Chinese New Year. They know the primary colours well and also know a few secondary colours like orange and green. The youngest three year olds enjoy the discovery of play dough shapes when using the cutters. They work happily with a wide range of media. Children enjoy singing and making music and do so tunefully, using actions enthusiastically in their rhymes and songs. They use the dressing-up clothes well to aid their imaginative play in the home corner and show confident social skills when playing with each other. Resources are good and the role-play areas are easily adaptable to a variety of themes during the year.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All adults support children in their learning and ensure that they gain from the activities through discussion, as they work. There is a good sense of fun encouraged in practical tasks, such as helping to make a model of, *'Jack's Beanstalk'*, and singing songs such as, *'Along Came Mr Crocodile'*. Activities are organised well and always suitably matched to the children's needs. A well-planned choice of materials in artistic activities helps the children to make good progress in developing their imaginative skills. For example, the chalk drawings of lighthouses, bubble paintings of *'Three Little Pigs'* and seed pictures show good standards in children's use of colour, shape and form. Good displays of children's work help to create a colourful environment in which all children are valued as individuals; examples include individual interpretations of an 'alien' and a 'wiggle', as well as carefully drawn Moslem prayer-mats and observational sketches of runner beans.