

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE HAYES NURSERY SCHOOL

Fishponds, Bristol

LEA area: Bristol

Unique reference number: 108895

Headteacher: Mrs S Rolfe

Reporting inspector: Mr M S Burghart
20865

Dates of inspection: 11th – 12th June 2002

Inspection number: 230444

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 - 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Symington Road Fishponds Bristol
Postcode:	BS16 2LL
Telephone number:	0117 9030405
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Appropriate authority:	Bristol LEA
Name of chair of governors:	Ms S Fryer
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20865	Mr M S Burghart Registered inspector	Personal and social development; Mathematical development; Physical development; Special educational needs.	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13911	Mrs J Gallichan Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How effectively does the school work with its parents?
22578	Mr D G Jones Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy; Knowledge and understanding of the world; Creative development; Equal opportunities; English as an additional language.	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

Little Hayes Nursery School is situated in the Fishponds area of Bristol. The nursery has places for 55 (full time equivalent) children aged between three and five years. Children all attend part time, half in the morning and half in the afternoon session. Children are drawn from a wide area, the majority from the immediate locality. The school provides good accommodation for two classes, with excellent outdoor facilities. A new community room is almost complete. There is an average of 27.5 children per class with a child to adult ratio of 9 to 1. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies widely depending on the needs of individuals, but overall is about average. The headteacher has been in post for five years. She is supported by two full time teachers (both of whom are temporary) and three nursery nurses. Eight children require extra support as a consequence of having English as an additional language. Twenty-one children are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Little Hayes Nursery is a very good school. It has a very good ethos and successfully encourages children to make choices and become independent. Children and staff get on very well together and teaching is good. As a result children's response to school is excellent and children make good progress, and often better. Children are on line to achieve all the expected Early Learning Goals¹ by the time they complete Year R in the infant school. The school is very well led and managed by a highly committed headteacher. Although as a nursery school, costs are relatively high, Little Hayes continues to give good value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides a very good curriculum which values play, challenges children and very successfully encourages an excellent response to school.
- Provision for children's personal development is very good.
- The school takes very good care of children.
- It is very well led and managed.
- Teaching is good.
- Standards in work towards the Early Learning Goals are good. Children achieve well.
- The management of children is of high quality and standards of behaviour are excellent.
- There is an excellent partnership between the school and parents.

What could be improved

In the context of this very good school there are no key issues to address. However the school is aware of the need to further develop curriculum planning in line with Foundation Stage² guidance; clarify the profile of children's attainment on entry; and continue to develop monitoring, once uncertainties in staffing are resolved, with better job descriptions. There are insufficient administrative support hours to complete all required tasks.

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

¹ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are 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.

² The Foundation Stage refers to children from entry to the nursery up to and including age six when they complete the reception year.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection in 1998 resulted in four key issues for improvement. The school has made good progress overall in addressing these, as well as moving forward in a variety of other areas. Better curriculum planning makes learning objectives clear and sets improved challenges for higher attaining children. This is followed up with better assessment procedures which identify strengths and weaknesses. Progress has been made in improving how staff check on initiatives, but with changes of staff there is still more to do in this direction. In addition to these areas, very good progress in developing accommodation has further enhanced the learning environment, and the quality of teaching has been improved. Strengths identified in the last report have been maintained. On the basis of policies and procedures in place the school is well placed for future development. The good value described in the last inspection has been maintained.

STANDARDS

The majority of children are on course to achieve the prescribed Early Learning Goals by the time they complete Year R in the infant school. Higher attaining children are likely to reach these goals earlier than this with some doing so before leaving the nursery. Results of assessments made in a variety of infant schools show that this has been the case in past years. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Strengths are in very good personal, social and emotional development, good communication, language and literacy skills, and above expected levels of knowledge and understanding of the world. In physical development many children exhibit above average skills by the time they leave. In mathematical and creative development children's achievements are in line with expectations. Children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they are six. Mathematics was an area for development highlighted in the last report. The situation has been improved, but this area still receives less emphasis than other aspects. Overall, nearly all children make at least good progress, with those with special educational needs and higher attainers achieving very well.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Children try hard, sustain concentration and obviously enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Children respond very well to each other, school routines and adults. Behaviour is managed extremely effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Children make choices and frequently show initiative. Relationships are excellent throughout.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Good, with very good features.

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.

Teaching has been improved since the last inspection. No teaching was considered unsatisfactory in this inspection compared with eight per cent last time, and at least one in five sessions were very good. All staff were observed teaching on a variety of occasions. The quality of teaching, which includes the contribution of nursery nurses, is judged good overall. This has good effects on children's learning and children are achieving well as a consequence. Strengths are in managing time, space and resources; giving children choices; questioning that gets children to express themselves and answer in more than single words; very good relationships; and very good preparation. A relative weakness is on the few occasions where children have too little chance to talk to adults. Special needs teaching is consistently good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: all aspects are planned for. The school provides a relevant and interesting, well balanced curriculum and makes very good use of play as a stimulus for learning. Excellent use is made of the high quality, outdoor area.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Very good: such children are well supported and achieve well and often reach close to expected levels. Nursery nurses make a significant contribution to the quality of this aspect of provision.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good: children are fully included and given good extra support.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: excellent provision for social development and very good for moral, helps children to be aware of right and wrong. Spiritual and cultural opportunities are now good and improved since the last inspection.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good: the school takes very good, safe, physical care of children and assessment is used well to help set targets. Staff know children very well. A need to clarify what children are capable of when they first arrive.

Links with parents and the subsequent impact of parents on the work of the school are judged excellent. Parents have a very high opinion of the school and give very good support. The home school partnership makes a significant contribution to children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the very committed headteacher now gives the school very clear educational direction and stability. Recent uncertainties about staffing have been resolved for September and this gives the opportunity to develop further the monitoring role of those with responsibilities. The school's low level of administrative support hours, and the headteacher's high teaching commitment, have negative effects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors give good support, especially through the chair and the special needs governor. All statutory requirements met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; the head is good at analysing what needs to be done and prioritising accordingly.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: although the school does not yet have a delegated budget. What funds it does control are spent wisely with best value principles followed. Time, staff, space and resources used very well to produce a very good learning environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management • The school is approachable. • Children like school. • Teaching is good. • The school cares about children. • Children make good progress. 	There was no consensus of negative views, and very few were expressed at all.

The overwhelming response of parents to the school is extremely positive. Nineteen parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector and a further six met the lay inspector during the inspection. Fifty-six parents (a high return of fifty per cent) returned the Ofsted questionnaire. Some parents expressed concerns over the question regarding 'work to do at home'. This questionnaire is standard practice for all types of schools and some questions (particularly this one) are more relevant to primary rather than nursery settings. At the meeting with the registered inspector parents were very happy with this aspect, being pleased to show an appropriate interest in what these small children do at school. Inspectors are pleased to support parents' very positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The positive profile of standards outlined in the last report in 1998 has been built upon. Trends over the last four years have been upward as a result of good analysis and increased target setting. Differences in the performance of boys and girls are not now significant following a programme of extra support aimed at raising boys' interest in reading and writing activities. Given that children continue to receive support of the same quality when they leave the school, it is likely that they will achieve the recommended Early Learning Goals in all the six prescribed areas of learning before they move from Year R to Year 1 in their various infant schools. Children make consistently good progress and frequently very good progress from what in most cases is an average starting point. Children with special needs achieve well and a significant proportion of them will be close to reaching the learning goals before the end of Year R. Information from local infant schools shows that Little Hayes children do well in the local education authority's 'baseline' assessment, carried out soon after children transfer. Notably good results are in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Higher attaining children often complete the learning goals even before they leave the nursery, effectively a year ahead of expectations. An area for development is clarifying what children are capable of when they first arrive.

2. Currently standards are very good for this age group in personal, social and emotional development. Children are learning how to take care of themselves and respond very well to other people. As a result relationships and behaviour are excellent and children, even those aged three, show very good confidence and demonstrate initiative and independence at levels which are good for their age.

3. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy and by the time they leave are above expectations for this age. Children respond very well to very good relationships with each other and adults and most are confident to speak and take part in role play and discussions. They take advantage of the many opportunities to experiment with 'writing' and all attempts to record things with marks on paper are highly valued by the school and parents. Consequently children are emerging as writers, and standards are judged good. Most children know that books are read from left to right and all understand that print has meaning. Children enjoy listening to stories and are beginning to associate letters with sound and words.

4. Mathematical development is now satisfactory with good features and has been improved since the last inspection. Children recognise numerals, can count in sequence and are aware of more and less. More able children are starting to add and take away. Lots of opportunities to sort by shape, size and colour have positive effects on children's mathematical awareness.

5. Standards of children's knowledge and understanding of the world are good, being above expectations. Children learn well through a mixture of play, where they gain much valuable hands-on experience and structured teaching, which is well planned to extend children's horizons.

6. Children have suitable opportunities to be creative and as a result are progressing as they should do and reaching appropriate levels for their age. All children are on line to reach the Early Learning Goals by Year 1 in the infant school.

7. In physical development children make very good progress and are clearly above what is expected in the nursery. They respond extremely well to many opportunities to improve their hand and eye co-ordination as well as exploring space and what their bodies are capable of, in the stimulating, well resourced, excellent outdoor environment.

8. The school can show that children make at least good progress and that it systematically adds value to what they know, can do and understand. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language do well compared with their ability and attainment when they arrive in the nursery and most are likely to reach the expected standards at the end of the Foundation Stage. The school has significantly improved provision for higher attaining children who now are achieving to their potential.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are excellent. Children's personal development is very good and makes a very positive contribution to how well children learn. This is a strength of the school and is a further improvement on the high standards reported last time. Excellent relationships between all children ensure happy and harmonious sessions where everyone enjoys working and playing together.

10. Children show their delight at being at school when they arrive at the beginning of the session. They come into the class ready to get straight on with activities after deciding what to do with their parents or carers. They happily move away from their parents and join their friends or engage in a few words with other adults. They quickly become absorbed in what they are doing and move from one activity to another with confidence. Attendance levels are satisfactory.

11. When children are working at their activities they take turns sensibly, share resources and chatter to their friends. A boy and girl playing in the pirate ship shared the 'bottle of rum' and took turns to steer the ship. A group of boys playing on the trikes and scooters swapped their mode of transport or joined their friend on the two-seater with no fuss or bother. Everyone gets on well together and there is good tolerance between children.

12. Children concentrate for good periods of time. Children working on the computer tried hard to move the mouse to create the right effect, trying again and again if unsuccessful. Children travelling through a sequence of apparatus waited for their turn patiently and watched with interest as others completed the course. They concentrated well throughout the activity. One boy showed particular attention and initiative as he moved the apparatus back into place for safety. Children demonstrated good control when following an animal trail, resisting the temptation to run even though they were excited by the activity.

13. Children listen well to instructions and to stories. Children learning how to direct the 'roamer' listened carefully to their teacher and then pressed the buttons in sequence as instructed. Children helped each other if one could not quite remember what to do next. Children listened with growing excitement to the story 'We're going on a bear hunt', joining in the repeated parts of the story with enthusiasm. Their full attention and interest in the story enabled them to successfully re-enact parts of the story.

14. Children's behaviour is excellent. Children are thoughtful and kind to each other. They look around for adult help immediately if another child hurts themselves. One child showed his concern for living things. A caterpillar which others had been looking at earlier had accidentally got a little squashed – the child quickly sought an adult's advice about where the best place would be to put it until it recovered!!

15. All children fully co-operate at 'tidy up time' – some really look forward to this time as it signals the next part of the session. Pupils are polite and courteous during milk and fruit time

when they help hand round the cartons and pieces of fruit. They know this is a time when they sit quietly and calmly. Children respond appropriately and settle down when they all gather in a circle and music is played for them to listen to. But they are ready for action again when it is time for some singing and many join in enthusiastically with the actions. Pupils sustain interest and participate well right until the end of the sessions after two and a half hours of constant activity and learning.

16. Inspectors wholeheartedly endorse parents' positive views about their children's enjoyment of school and their good behaviour whilst at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching from teachers and nursery nurses is good with very good features. This is a good improvement compared with the last inspection, particularly as two in every nine sessions are now very good. It is to the school's (and more especially the headteacher's) credit that with a variety of staff changes teaching has been improved. Good support and professional development and good analysis of both personal and school priorities have had positive effects. However there is still more to do to improve job descriptions to reflect the school's good practice.

18. All staff were observed interacting with children. Each had more than one session judged as good and all teachers at least one very good 'lesson'. Strengths in teaching are in:

- Good planning which allows for a very good mix of child and teacher initiated activities and allows children opportunities to make choices;
- Good preparation which means the same good quality of opportunities are ready for both morning and afternoon children, and that all children are fully included in all activities;
- Making very good use of play to enable children to learn through first hand experience;
- Providing good support for children with special educational needs, English as an additional language, and for potentially higher attaining children on the basis of much improved assessment to set targets and measure progress;
- Excellent management of children and high quality relationships which lead to children's excellent attitudes and behaviour;
- Particularly good use of outdoor facilities and resources which has very good effects on children's personal, as well as physical development;
- Very good use of support staff, time and resources.

19. A particularly good example of very good teaching was when a teacher enabled children to gain in confidence on a variety of different climbing and balancing apparatus. She very skilfully got children to observe and evaluate the performance of others to improve their own. Children achieved very well and made very good progress.

20. Minor areas which could be improved are: in increasing dialogue with children so as to prompt them to communicate and express themselves; and avoiding over helping children when they are involved in intricate activities such as cutting and spreading.

21. The staff's commitment to raising and maintaining standards linked with the high quality of relationships underpins the school's very good ethos. Considering that both class teachers have been temporary appointments this year this is a testament to the management of the head who leads the staff as a whole as a good team and sets a good example. One hundred per cent of parents returning the Ofsted questionnaire reported that they think teaching is good. Inspection evidence shows that they are right.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good with some excellent features, an improvement on the curriculum offered at the time of the last inspection. Successful changes and improvements have been made since then, which have had a positive impact on learning. Planning has been improved since the last inspection, at which time it was a key issue, and is now shows very good detail. However, the time is now appropriate for the nursery to review its planning in order that its documentation might more closely reflect the most recent recommendations for the Foundation Stage of learning. Whilst there are plenty of references to activities within the planning, there are now far more references to learning outcomes, missing at the last inspection.

23. Strengths are noted in areas of the curriculum such as personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, structured play and the involvement of children in their learning in order to give them a degree of independence.

24. A good overview of the curriculum (a curriculum map) ensures that all areas of learning are visited. Regular weekly meetings ensure that the next steps in learning are discussed and noted. These are well supported by the notes kept by all adults about significant elements of progress noted for children in their particular groups. The strength of the cross curricular nature of the nursery's termly and half termly themes can easily be seen as children move around their classes working at art, science and language elements of their theme on journeys. Following a language lesson on the 'bear hunt' book, children go outside to carry out their own 'hunt' looking for hidden toys. They are questioned as they move through the grounds, have their vocabulary extended, then have to describe what they did when they return to their class.

25. The use of parents to help children plan their own choice of activities at the start of each session, not only involves parents, but gives children a feeling of independence in their learning. Later when activities are more directed by teachers, children work equally hard, sustaining interest and completing work well. There is now a very good balance between opportunities for children to select their own activities and those which teachers devise for them.

26. Of particular quality is the use of outdoor facilities as part of the daily curriculum. Not only is this work directed very well to promote physical development through climbing, balancing, riding and other physical activities, it gives excellent support to children's personal and social development. This is noted in the way children share, take turns, work together and enjoy the company of others as they use the very good outdoor resources. Equally, the outdoor work covers many aspects of science, art and an appreciation of the natural world. It is a true oasis for the children.

27. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum very well. For example a dad demonstrated the dress and life style of people long ago, so that children had a virtual first hand experience of it. Other parents with Asian and Chinese backgrounds share their culture with the children.

28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There are good quality individual education plans, which are written with clear targets known to all adults. These targets are tracked well by adults and are regularly reviewed and extended.

29. The nursery ensures that all children have equal opportunities to the full curriculum. In spite of the short time between morning and afternoon sessions, the nursery is cleaned so that afternoon children are presented with the same quality of environment as their morning counterparts. All adults pay particular attention to children for whom English is not their first

language, whilst at the same time ensuring that the most able children are given opportunities to extend their learning. This was noted in small group language activities in one of the classes.

30. The school has very good relationships with Briarwood Special School and a number of schools to which Little Hayes children transfer. These relationships are very positive, help children at times of transfer and give them good opportunities for social development. Overall, the school makes very good provision for children's personal and social development.

31. The very high level of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an improvement of the good situation noted at the last inspection.

32. The children's obvious delight in their excellent natural surroundings is self evident and a strong influence on allowing them to see the wonder of the natural world. The outdoor area is used for noting different trees and their leaves, watching butterflies, looking for mini-beasts and noting the growth of a variety of plants. In the classroom, a nursery nurse was seen gently leading children into examining a selection of dead fish. They showed amazement at the smooth feel of the skin and almost disbelief at the fact that the fish had tongues and teeth! Provision for children's spiritual development is now good, although provision is not noted in planning documents.

33. The excellent standard of behaviour observed throughout the inspection leaves no doubt as to the success of children's very good moral development. Children clearly know and accept the difference between right and wrong and have excellent role models provided by all adults in the nursery.

34. The excellent quality of children's interactions with their classmates and adults, is due, in no small part to the excellent support children receive in promoting their social development. During play the children are seen happily enjoying the very good range of activities provided for them, without conflict and being co-operative and considerate for one another. During snack times, teachers assist children to remember to say, "Please" and "Thank you". In their group work, in classes, children share resources well and help each other. This was seen as children worked at the computer and with construction kits.

35. The school makes good provision for children's cultural development, noted as only satisfactory at the last inspection. Through the reciting of nursery rhymes and telling stories, children learn about their own and other cultures. Through contact with visitors they have experienced the cultures of China and Asia, seeing costumes, hearing songs and celebrating Chinese New Year and Diwali. Both of these celebrations led to creative work, with children making Diva lamps and having Mendhi patterns drawn for them. Displays of multicultural instruments and access to a wide range of role play costumes from different cultures support pupils' development in this area. Thus the multicultural aspect of children's development is now good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Children receive a high level of care, support and guidance throughout their time at Little Hayes Nursery. Staff know children extremely well and work hard to ensure their academic and personal needs are met. Supervision is very good and there is close attention to ensuring children's safety during all activities. The school has maintained the high standards reported at the time of the last inspection and resolved the health and safety issues raised at that time.

37. Children are encouraged to play and work safely, especially in the outside area and when using the play equipment. Staff have a keen eye for potential problems and advise

children promptly to prevent them hurting themselves. The premises are regularly assessed for any potential hazards. The school's health and safety policy is comprehensive and is reviewed regularly. Good use is made of the expertise of the health and safety governor. Arrangements for first aid are appropriate and staff receive additional training, for example how to deal with severe allergic reaction, when children enter the nursery with specific medical needs. Child protection procedures meet requirements. The headteacher who is the designated teacher with responsibility has recently received update training.

38. The school clearly communicates its high expectations regarding good attendance and behaviour in its correspondence and at meetings with parents. Follow-up telephone calls are made to parents when a child is not attending regularly. Registers are completed, as necessary, at the beginning of sessions but this does take a long time because of the nature of the arrival of parents over a considerable time span. Registers are now stored appropriately to ensure their easy access in the case of an emergency. Monitoring and promoting regular attendance is good, although the school has less than average administrative support hours.

39. The staggered admission of children means small groups of children are introduced to a calm and settled environment where expectations regarding good behaviour have already been established. The very good example shown by all adults of respect and care sets an excellent model for all to follow. Children know they are behaving as they should by a smile or a word of praise from the adults who teach and care for them. The school takes prompt action to eliminate inappropriate behaviour of any kind and has systems in place to record any incidents, including racial incidents. All necessary procedures were followed before making a very rare fixed term exclusion last year.

40. Excellent relationships across the whole school ensure children can explore, experiment and learn in a caring and supportive environment. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. When adults have to intervene they take a positive approach, encouraging children to 'do the correct thing' rather than just giving a negative message by saying 'don't'. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good ensuring any potential difficulties are identified early and appropriate supportive action taken.

41. Since the last inspection the school has made significant progress in assessment. The quality of its procedures for assessment and the use it makes of those assessments are now both good.

42. The school has produced individual booklets in which it records all assessment information relating to each child. This ensures that at a glance it is possible to see the overall progress made by each child. However, there needs to be more clarity in the initial assessments made of children as they enter the nursery, so that a firm starting position can be seen and the 'value added' nature of the nursery's work can then be more clearly noted. The nursery has asked schools to which it sends children, to note the progress Little Hayes children make in their early days at their new schools, in order that it might make further adjustments to teaching and learning.

43. On a day to day basis, all adults make notes on the particular children in their groups. This information is discussed with other practitioners, almost on a daily basis. When it is felt that a child has accomplished an element of the 'stepping stones', noted in the most recent recommendations for the planning of work in the Foundation Stage of education, the teacher shades in the description of the 'stepping stone' to show successful completion. However, currently these are not being dated, therefore it is not always possible to see the child's rate of progress in the six areas of learning.

44. At the same time, written notes, by adults, are appended to the booklet, which show and describe significant elements of progress for each child. This booklet then gives the nursery a good base from which to discuss with parents the progress their children have

made, when they meet each term. At these conference meetings, targets are discussed for future progress and the help of parents is sought, in support of the very good partnership established in the nursery.

45. In order that all adults can make similar judgements of the quality of work completed by children, each subject co-ordinator adds examples of work to a portfolio of evidence for each area of learning. This serves as a good guide for new teachers and support adults, but details of how the work relates directly to the 'stepping stone' descriptors, is not shown often enough.

46. Having made well founded assessments, staff then make good use of this information in order that they might plan more accurately to deliver the curriculum to suit individuals and groups of children according to their needs. This might further be enhanced if practitioners were to make comments on their planning sheets, indicating those children who had exceeded, or not reached, the learning outcomes of individual lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school has successfully maintained and improved upon its partnership with parents since the last inspection. The school's genuine desire to involve parents in all aspects of their children's learning is recognised and appreciated by parents who hold the school in the very highest regard. Parents could not praise the school enough in their meetings with inspectors before and during the inspection. Communication, especially formal and informal opportunities to talk with staff, is very good and parents feel fully informed about their child's progress.

48. A good number of parents returned their Ofsted questionnaire and expressed their overwhelming satisfaction with the work of the school. All parents feel comfortable about approaching the school and feel the school works closely with them. They recognise that teaching is good, their children make good progress, and that the school is well led and managed. Parents at the Ofsted pre-inspection meeting and a group who met with an inspector during the inspection confirmed the positive views expressed through the questionnaire. However, the school is not complacent and regularly surveys parents' views through its own questionnaires to ensure it continues to meet parents' needs.

49. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about events and activities. Parents especially appreciate the diary of events issued at the beginning of each term. Very good information about nursery life, expectations and routines are carefully explained in the well presented prospectus. Information about the curriculum is always available as teachers make their weekly planning files available in the classrooms. Parents are invited each term for formal consultations with teachers to discuss their child's progress. However, parents view as even more important the ongoing informal information they receive about their child's progress at the beginning and end of sessions. Staff make themselves available and interact with parents freely. A written report is sent home at the end of the school year. These reports are satisfactory, however the school plans to make improvements this year.

50. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning right from the beginning. The carefully planned induction and staggered admission procedures ensure both parents and children are carefully introduced to school routines. Home visits ensure that school and parent relationships get off to a good start. Each day parents or carers come into classes with their children and help them plan their activities for the first part of the session – this is an excellent way of involving parents in their children's experiences whilst at school. Parents are invited to help in classes with various activities or come and share their expertise or interests with the children. Children take home books to share with their parents who receive helpful advice and guidance on how to get the best from this time with their child.

Parents' involvement in their child's learning at school and home has a very positive impact on the progress children make.

51. The Thursday Get Together club meets regularly – sometimes just for a 'cuppa' but on many occasions to listen to an invited speaker or join a discussion on relevant issues which affect their children – all organised by the headteacher in her constant endeavour to meet the needs of parents. The completion of the new community room will make these events easier for the school to accommodate. Parents attending the club are currently working hard to organise the school's summer fair. Parents raise considerable funds each year, which enhance the facilities and resources available for children.

52. The benefits to children of the excellent partnership between school and parents cannot be understated. This is a major strength of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. This is an improvement from the 'good' judgement of the last inspection. She skilfully has created a very good team of staff some of whom are temporary and most of whom are new since the last report. She maintains very good educational direction for the school drawn together from the contributions of staff, governors and parents. The resulting school improvement plan is a very good tool to run the school with timescales, allocated responsibilities and costings. It sets criteria for success in advance to judge progress by and is regularly reviewed. The school's excellent aims and values are very well communicated to everyone and are clearly reflected in planning at all levels.

54. The four key issues for improvement raised by the last inspection have all been addressed and the school is judged as having made good progress. Higher attaining children are much better challenged and make very good progress as a result. Curriculum planning is improved (with as the school is aware, still more to do against guidance for the Foundation Stage). Assessment procedures have been developed to the point where they are considered good compared with unsatisfactory last time and the school now has efficient systems to review its practices, although there is still more monitoring needed by curriculum leaders once the new staff team is established from September 2002. In addition very good progress in terms of management of building improvements, staff changes, the quality of teaching, and communications with parents are all having positive impacts.

55. Special educational needs are managed very effectively with very good individual education plans which are well communicated to staff and parents to bring about systematic improvement in children's attainment. The school manages communication in general very well and this forms the basis of an excellent partnership with parents, the community and other schools. Provision for those children with English as an additional language is well managed and appropriate links are maintained with outside agencies where necessary.

56. The accommodation is now very good. Improved entrance, office facilities and the addition of a community room, with large disabled toilet facilities, is the result of very recent building works. The outside play and work area is excellent. Children have access from both classes to this large space, which is equipped and organised for a wide range of activities. Classrooms are organised very well to promote independence. Each class has its own toilet facilities and wet play area. Classrooms are enhanced by bright, colourful and stimulating displays of the highest quality. The premises are well maintained. Children can learn effectively in this very well organised and stimulating environment.

57. Staff, accommodation and resources (especially facilities outside) are managed very well. Staff are well deployed and supported through good planning and professional development procedures. Aspects which could be improved include:

- Developing job descriptions so that they are dated and more specific about responsibilities, particularly with regard to monitoring;
- Increasing the number of hours of administrative time available to the school.

58. Currently the school has below average office support time and this coupled with the headteacher's high level of time spent teaching increases the amount of work which has to be carried out after hours. An example of the negative effect which this lack of hours has on the efficiency of the school is that new ICT systems have been introduced to record each child's performance, but as no extra time has been allocated to it, the potential of the package is not capitalised upon.

59. Governors, especially the well informed chair person, support the school well and with the head evaluate the success of decisions made. All statutory requirements are met. The lack of a delegated budget makes some forward planning difficult, but the school reports that it is effectively supported by the local education authority. Particularly good management of resources and links with building contractors have minimised disruption to children's education during extension work which will significantly enhance the school's links with the local community. Day to day management of finances is good. The school is careful to spend wisely and the result is good quality resources. All grants are used for designated purposes and although spending is above average for primary schools, Little Hayes continues to give good value for money. Given the more rigorous requirements since the last report in 1998, this represents improvement.

60. Overall the school provides a very good, stimulating learning environment. Its very good management has very positive effects on children's learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In the context of this very good school there are no key issues to be addressed. The following areas, most of which already feature as part of school planning, will form the basis of the governors' action plan:

- Developing still further curriculum planning in line with national guidance for the Foundation Stage.
Paragraphs: 22, 33, 43, 45, 54,74, 82, 102.
- Clarifying the profile of children's attainment when they first join the school to use as a benchmark for progress made.
Paragraphs: 1, 42.
- Improving the monitoring roles of staff with responsibilities by allowing them time to observe colleagues; developing job descriptions accordingly.
Paragraphs: 17, 54, 57, 82, 103.
- Increasing the amount of administrative hours available to the school and reducing the teaching commitment of the headteacher to allow more time for her management role.
Paragraphs: 38, 57, 58.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	18	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	22	66	11	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 almost 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)	55
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

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	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	18

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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 pupils per qualified teacher	18 (FTE)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9 (FTE)
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 – 2001
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	£
Total income	23002 ³
Total expenditure	167853
Expenditure per pupil	3052
Balance brought forward from previous year	3156
Balance carried forward to next year	1104

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

³ This nursery does not benefit from controlling a fully delegated budget. This figure reflects the amount of money (including fund raising that headteacher and governors have at their disposal).

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	89	11	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	18	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	32	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	38	13	4	13
The teaching is good.	84	16	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	21	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	9	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	31	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	80	20	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	93	7	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	18	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	73	13	4	0	10

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

62. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the school. The good situation described in the last inspection has been very successfully built upon.

63. Standards are very good, being well above expectations for this age, and reflect on very good progress over the time children are in the school. All children including those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well in terms of personal, social and emotional development. This is the result of very good planning, teaching and copious opportunities for children to develop their independence, work and play with others, and generally become confident. For example staff are very well prepared for each session. Learning objectives are very clear and equipment is set out ready. This stimulates children from the start and children's attitudes and behaviour are excellent as a consequence. Teachers and nursery nurses interact well with children, prompting them to make progress with just enough support. Lots of 'hands on' activities provide stimulus for children to learn through their senses and opportunities for children to express themselves for example in painting and singing, have positive effects on emotional development.

64. Throughout the nursery expectations are high and in most cases children are not 'over helped'. For example children are expected to put their coats away and to have a go at managing buttons and fasteners when changing and putting on aprons. Children are keen to be involved in 'tidy up time' and many were observed using their initiative to put things back in their place.

65. Relationships are excellent. Children readily take turns, share and are very tolerant and considerate. For their age children have very good awareness of how their actions affect others. For example children playing outside observe the safety rules for the adventure trail and wait sensibly for their turn. During a very good small group time activity, extending the theme of a 'bear hunt' to solve clues and follow a trail to find toys that the nursery nurse had hidden, children showed particularly good self control. Even in a high state of excitement they still remembered that (and chanted), "We said we would walk!" and did so! On many occasions children were seen to play co-operatively, developing social and communication skills: such as in the role play pirate ship, at the painting table, and when dressing and packing for holidays. As with many activities children sustained attention for relatively long periods and this is a very good indication of successful personal development.

66. Even at this young age children are aware of right and wrong and respond very well to school routines and conventions. For example stopping when told to and observing the tambourine beat which is the sign to move to 'tidy up time' with no fuss when totally engrossed in play. Even children out in the play house playing dressing up games got out of the role play clothes and into the classroom without any persuasion or help from adults within three minutes of the signal.

67. The school's very good ethos fosters a high degree of trust between children and adults which means children are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them. It is clear that children are well challenged and given the chance to take responsibility: for example children with the help of their parents select the first activity for the day and together record it on cards which serve as a catalogue of what they have done. This system means that parents have the starting point for discussions when children get home about what they

might have done and this has very positive effects on literacy skills and links between home and school.

68. All the parents who attended the Ofsted meetings and those who returned the questionnaire, where there was a high rate of return, reported that their children like school and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Inspection evidence shows that they are right.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Children attain above what might be expected of them overall by the time they leave the nursery and they achieve well. At the last inspection they were noted as attaining only 'appropriate levels'. Most, including children whose first language is not English and children with special educational needs, make good progress in most aspects of this area of learning. Almost all of the older children are working well towards the recommended learning targets in listening and speaking, and in understanding that pictures and words carry meaning, and recognising their own names.

70. Children have ample opportunities to listen and follow instructions. They talk happily to each other and use spoken language readily to make their thoughts known to their friends and to adults. The vast majority already talk in sentences and need little encouragement to listen to stories such as 'Don't put your finger in the jelly'. New vocabulary is regularly introduced and children remember stem, root and petal from their recent discussions about plants. During role play in the pirate ship, a young sailor was seen mopping the deck and complaining about other sailors being, "Very untidy!" Children with English as an additional language are making good progress and show understanding of many words and phrases as they learn from both their friends and adults. One little girl, for whom English was an additional language, corrected the inspector who thought that the play dough shape was a sausage, by adding, "They are chips for my mummy." Teaching in this area of learning is good and sometimes very good, with adults giving children maximum opportunities to practise through a wide range of good questioning skills.

71. Teachers use a good range of ways to introduce and interest children in books. Each teaching area has books well displayed. Parents are encouraged to share reading with their children and some were noted looking at books with their children at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions. Children regularly demonstrate that they know that print carries meaning and are all able to turn pages from left to right. Many can recount a story they have heard and even children who are on the register for special needs recognise books they have seen before when books in their rooms are changed. In a small group activity, children had heard the story of 'We're going on a bear hunt'. They discussed how the bear felt, then using good cross-curricular links they made the journey of the story using a construction kit, showing the grass, mud and the bear's cave. Very many children recognise their own names and those of others in the class. This is supported when planning cards are discussed at break times and name slips are held up for children to recognise. Many recognise individual letters, some of which appear in their names, as they look at books. In a session for a small group of higher attaining children, the teacher explored rhyming words, with children able to match the start and finish sounds of words.

72. The teaching of writing is good and children are making suitable progress towards attaining the early goals for learning in advance of the usual time. Activities in books and on displays show that children can make marks, scribble shapes, copy from left to right, trace a shape and copy above and below writing. Many children are beginning to move away from simple mark making to rather more recognisable letter shapes. As this occurs, adult support is at hand to guide children to correct letter formation, often through patterns and shape work. A class teacher was seen working alongside a boy who had recently made sudden and exciting progress in his writing. He could now write his name, recognise the name of his

partner at the computer and type in both names on a finished piece of computer art work. In another group activity, children had written on a list, items that the pirates might want to take on their journey. Many words were already recognisable, such as 'froot'. All children then have turns in selecting something from the 'feely' bag. This contains items such as a telescope, coconut and flag. Children describe what they feel and the teacher concentrates their thinking on the initial and end sounds of the words, helping them in their preparation for writing.

73. A significant strength in the teaching of both reading and writing skills is that teaching builds on what children know through their practical experiences rather than futile completion of work sheets and copy writing. Teachers use a successful experiential approach to give children confidence in recording their ideas in their own ways. However, teachers now need to focus more clearly on the use of key word cards, for example, in order to bridge the gap to recording, not rushing into formal writing, but focusing on understanding and concept formation in order to give a firm foundation to children's learning.

74. Planning for this area of the curriculum is good with some very good features. There are clear learning outcomes noted in the planning, alongside good supportive activities. Work is assessed well and notes are made of significant steps forward. These are shared between the adults and when appropriate, recorded in the record booklets. However, too little reference is made in planning to the designated 'stepping stones' referred to in Foundation Stage planning.

75. Overall teaching shows an improvement since the last inspection, as much teaching is now good with some examples of very good teaching seen. Where very good teaching was seen, it was typified often by excellent management skills, with children being challenged effectively and receiving very good support through a range of well thought out questioning. As a result teachers were able to capitalise on the very good attitudes shown by children who wanted to learn, and enjoyed their experiences.

Mathematical development

76. The last report required the school to raise the profile of mathematical development. Although there is still more work to do, this is being successfully achieved through better planning and making learning objectives clearer. Children make at least satisfactory progress which results in standards when children leave the school being now in line with expectations. The majority of children are on line to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they complete Year R in the infant school.

77. Children are keen and interested in mathematical activities. Most arrive at school with average levels of attainment and are helped to make appropriate progress. They enjoy grouping things by their characteristics and sorting by shape, size and colour: for example playing matching games and completing simple jigsaws in 'worktime'. Children were observed to choose these activities as part of the start of the session work selected from a wide range of things set out by staff. Most children by the time they leave can recognise numerals to five and some to ten. They enjoy counting games, rhymes and songs, and more able children are beginning to solve simple addition and subtraction problems. Children appreciate that things can be large and small and are encouraged to make comparisons and begin to put things in order. Activities at the 'maths table' often involve weighing to reinforce concepts of heavier and lighter, and more able children are starting to use standard measures such as grams.

78. Work and play at sand and water trays, and in the kitchen, give children good experience of volume and capacity as well as being fun. Children compare how much different containers hold and are encouraged to use the correct vocabulary, such as full and empty.

79. Good links are made with other areas of learning. For example children use magnetic 'fishing rods' to catch fish labelled with different numbers to total certain amounts; and outdoors children play games where they throw bean bags into containers faced with numerals, naming them in order and trying to score points. These activities develop physical as well as mathematical skills and are seen as good fun. Good use is made of information and communication technology to enhance mathematical development, not only in sorting and grouping on screen, but with a programmable floor robot to which children give numerical commands to make it travel. The school's intention to enable children to learn through firsthand experience and play is effective, and a good balance is made through good record keeping between child initiated and staff directed activities.

80. Teaching in this aspect is satisfactory with good features. At best staff make good use of opportunities to get children to count and be aware of difference. For example in circle time teachers get children to count those present and encourage children to name those who are away, and count on, and for higher attaining children back, to give a total for the class. In each case observed staff interaction with individuals and groups improved children's performance and understanding. Least successful sessions are where children are involved in activities with mathematical potential and have little contact with adults: for example children playing with hoops of different sizes, sending them varying distances, but having no opportunity to discuss shape, size and performance. Staff use good mathematical vocabulary and make good connections with language, particularly related to position; this term reinforcing 'over, through, by and under' in parallel with the theme of 'travel'. Children are introduced to words related to time and money in preparation for their understanding of value: for example knowing that it is 'tidy up time'; and that packets of biscuits cost more pennies than single ones.

81. All children regardless of special educational needs, gender or background have the same mathematical opportunities and the fully inclusive nature of the school is guaranteed.

82. Mathematical development is effectively managed by a senior teacher who now has a permanent contract. She has ensured that there are sufficient resources and that staff are well aware of expectations. However, there is a need to update some planning in line with national guidance for the Foundation Stage level descriptions and for the leader to have more opportunities to observe other staff at work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Most children make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding in this area of learning. They show a keen interest in what they do, due to the high emphasis placed on first hand experiences and the creative way in which a wide range of planned activities are offered to them. This suggests an improvement on standards seen at the last inspection. Children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the nursery.

84. An investigation set out in an alcove in a classroom allowed children to see and understand about how fishes show similarities and differences when compared with humans. A patient, sympathetic and knowledgeable teaching assistant was encouraging children to touch the dead fish. Following initial reticence, some of the children were absolutely amazed at the texture of the skin, the fact that fish had teeth, tongues and a backbone just like themselves. Although planning for this lesson did not suggest that there would be opportunities to develop children spiritually, it was evident that children were in awe and wonder of one of the creatures from God's created world.

85. Children in the other class had experimented with planting bulbs and had seen, at first hand, how bulbs planted indoors, outside and in the dark, grew in different ways. In good cross-curricular fashion they had then drawn and painted pictures of the plants.

86. The wonderful outdoor facilities, which the nursery has, are often used very effectively to promote learning in this area of children's development. One teacher has set up a leaf and tree trail, in which children take coloured and laminated sheets with them as they walk through the grounds noting down the various trees and leaves they see, ticking them off on their pictorial lists. Children have carried out simple investigations and observations using hand lenses in mini-beast hunts. Thus work in the science element of their knowledge and understanding of the world shows that very good progress has been made in learning.

87. Work using computers and other information and communication technology is good. Children were seen working in pairs on paint programs showing good mouse skills. They were seen typing their names on their work. Other children had opportunities to give instructions to a floor robot. They program in instructions so that it moves forwards and backwards between the group, as they sit on the floor. Many children were seen operating listening centres at which they listened to stories on tape, happily operating the controls.

88. Children often design and make small items, very often linked with 'small world' activities. They make homes for the bear in a story they have been listening to, using simple construction kits. They make boats and place items 'on board' that the ship will be bringing from another country. With a volunteer grandma, children work in the kitchen, icing biscuits and creating designs. The adult encouraged the use of correct language for shape and texture. Although some opportunities were missed to discuss mathematical concepts of greater and smaller than, for example, children had good opportunities to extend their language and vocabulary.

89. Not a great deal of evidence was available to show the extent of children's understanding of time and place. A display showing a world map for children to track their holidays and journeys was in evidence, whilst in another display children had drawn their routes to school, suggesting that they knew where they lived, their road and often their house number. Children talk freely about members of their families. They have an understanding of their own culture and talk about the recent Jubilee celebrations. They know that other children in their classes have cultures based in countries beyond their own and readily accept differences in looks, speech and life styles. They are happy to share their music, dress in clothes typical of their countries and share their celebrations of Diwali, Chinese New Year and Eid for example.

90. Children have a very positive attitude to this area of learning, encouraged by the well organised provision of a lively learning environment, which enables children to become confident and active learners, growing in independence. They are beginning to learn how to learn rather than merely responding to directed activities. Teachers are actively involved with children in their learning, which has a positive effect on the progress they make. Teaching is always good, and both staff and children make the very best use of resources. This area of learning has a positive effect on children's personal, social and cultural development. However, the leader has no time to observe what other staff are doing in response to joint planning.

Physical development

91. Because of good, and frequently better, teaching and very good provision in terms of space and equipment, children are achieving very well and are well above what is usually expected of this age group.

92. Planning is good and takes into account fine skills such as manipulating small jigsaw pieces and little components of construction kits. There is much on offer which encourages children to develop hand and eye skills which will eventually result in writing and tool handling.

During 'worktime' where children choose what to do, there are carefully planned activities which staff set out ready in themed areas. These range from dressing and undressing, learning to cope with buttons, Velcro and zips, painting at easels using large and fine brushes, making collages of boats and fish, experimenting with cutting and sticking techniques, sorting and sequencing when packing things in bags for the holidays. Children's skills using the keyboard and mouse of the computer are good. Higher attainers were observed skilfully dragging items across the screen and dropping them to 'dress teddy', or classify them into different groups. Good progress was seen when children used knives to attempt to cut and spread sandwiches and decorate biscuits for pirates, introducing children to the kitchen area.

93. There are many opportunities to climb, run, throw, jump, ride and balance. Children grow in confidence and are well aware of what their bodies can do. Progress in this aspect is very good. For example in a very good session children were very well taught how to travel safely around a small circuit of different apparatus following the over, under and through theme common to the week's plans. The teacher interacted extremely well with the children and skilfully helped them to explore different ways of moving. One boy was afraid that he might fall. Without taking away his independence the teacher coaxed him to try. After a few minor bumps he made huge progress and followed the circuit twice more, experimenting very successfully with a variety of movements and becoming an example to others.

94. There is an excellent balance of 'worktime' play and the more obviously focused activities of 'small group time'. Staff keep good daily records to ensure that children are involved in a suitable range of activities and are good at persuading children, for example outside, to learn how to throw a frisbee. Small group time includes a wide range of making, doing and role play: for example manning the pirate ship, heaving on ropes and dancing the hornpipe. Children are clearly extended physically as well as mentally and are being encouraged to watch others to evaluate and make improvements to their own actions. This was very clear when children tried throwing bean bags into numbered tubs, improving their aim from different distances by copying the most successful children.

95. Children's response to good and very good teaching and provision is enthusiastic and full of obvious enjoyment. Children seldom overstep the mark and are very considerate of others: for example very good steering avoids serious accidents between trikes and scooters, following the timely intervention of a nursery nurse, teaching children how to maintain control (both of themselves as well as the toys!). Children are clearly well challenged and managed and in return their behaviour and relationships are excellent. They sustain attention very well, but stop when time is up with no fuss.

96. Provision to encourage children's physical development is very successful, especially making excellent use of the high quality outdoor area, and children's standards are well above expectations. This aspect is an undoubted strength of the school.

Creative development

97. The vast majority of children are expected to reach the expected level so that they achieve the recommended goals for this area of learning by the time they are six. They achieve slightly higher levels in music and imaginative play than they do in art work. This is a similar picture to that seen at the previous inspection.

98. Some children achieve high standards in painting and drawing, whilst others are still at a very early stage of development. Observational paintings of flowers show good use of colour and clear use of line and tone to create the effect of shape. A group of children working at sea pictures mixed colours from their palettes but could perhaps benefit from a second dish to mix and experiment with their colours before applying them to paper. Here the teacher had a good selection of paintings for children to look at and comment upon. Previously

completed work showed that children have had experience of printing with vegetables and fruit and have enjoyed printing with their hands.

99. Children show sound cutting and joining skills as they experiment with simple collage work. They choose their colours and papers carefully and know what effect they wish to achieve. Not so evident, is a wide range of three-dimensional work. Although children were seen working with malleable materials, shaping and forming them into recognisable objects, the range of finished three-dimensional products was limited. One good example of completed work was that of children making Diya lamps in connection with multicultural work for Diwali.

100. Children love music. As they come into the nursery, calming music is often playing, creating the right atmosphere for the start of the day. When children gather to discuss their work, sessions often end with singing. Most of the children can remember the words of the songs and sing with gusto and enthusiasm. Several children were seen experimenting with a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, displayed well in the classes. Children often sit in small groups experimenting with sounds and seeing exactly what effect different ways of striking the instruments have on the sounds made. Music is played regularly through the day, at both the start and end, and when children are working at activities. Music is sometimes from other cultures, extending children's cultural development.

101. Children make satisfactory and often good progress in their creative development; this includes both children for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs. In the short space of time some of them have been in the nursery they have gained confidence and the ability to use a range of techniques to express their feelings. A small group of children working outside at a table chose from an interesting range of string, paper, shells, stones and grasses to produce small collages. Children enjoy being creative and are prepared to concentrate and persevere for quite some time, considering their age, to develop and complete their tasks. They are proud of their achievements and are happy to talk about what they are doing. Treasure Island maps are on display showing good control of brush work.

102. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and often good. It is better when teachers have the balance right between teaching the progressive development of skills and of giving children autonomy to make their own choices and use their imagination and creativity freely. Improving the quality of planning to include reference to the 'stepping stones' recommended in Foundation Stage guidance would be beneficial from this point of view. All adults take great care in displaying the children's work, which is a tribute to their efforts and those of the children.

103. Role play has developed well since the last inspection. This is due in no small way to the choice of themes and the availability of role play materials. The pirate ship in one class is a magnet for role play activities. In a short period of observation a steady stream of children took part in activities around the ship. Some simply come to see what is happening whilst others spend ten or fifteen minutes there, swabbing the decks, steering the ship and even singing imaginary sea shanties as they travel along. No conflicts were noted and children were more than happy to share the area with others. From time to time adults came to the area and took on roles in order to maintain the creative success of the activities. However on occasions adults visited these activities but failed to spend time extending vocabulary for the children. Improved monitoring by the aspect leader would avoid this.