

INSPECTION REPORT

WYNDHAM PARK NURSERY SCHOOL

Grantham

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120364

Headteacher: Ms Daphne Carré

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Øyen
7167

Dates of inspection: 27 – 28 May 2002

Inspection number: 230515

Short 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 – 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hill Avenue Grantham Lincolnshire
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr J E G Wilks
Date of previous inspection:	6 July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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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	
Pupils' 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	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wyndham Park is a community nursery school in Grantham. One hundred and four children attend part time. There is a high demand for places as it is the only nursery school in the town maintained by the local education authority. Most of the children live locally and come from varying social backgrounds. Five children attend the eight-place assessment unit for pre-school children with special educational needs in the morning and three in the afternoon. Ten children in the nursery have also been identified as having special educational needs and 17 in total receive support from outside agencies, predominantly for speech difficulties, hearing difficulties, autism and developmental delay. One child has a statement of special educational needs and has full-time support. Four children are learning English as a second language and they have periods of specialist teaching each week. The children start in the nursery in the September after their third birthday and leave in July to move to primary schools. Some have had pre-school experience and some continue to attend other pre-school groups during their time at the nursery. The children's attainment on entry varies but is generally similar to that of children of the same age. The parents' room and administrative area, completed just before the inspection, were not in full use.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wyndham Park is a good nursery that, in line with its prime aim, provides "a warm, caring and friendly environment for children and adults". The children make good progress because the adults are successful in making them feel secure and in giving them the confidence to try a wide range of practical experiences. Good teaching ensures that the children make good progress over time. Children with special educational needs play a full part in nursery life and achieve well because the staff recognise and meet their needs. The headteacher leads by example and fosters strong, effective teamwork between teachers, support staff, parents and other agencies. The nursery provides good value for money, especially in the work of the assessment unit.

What the school does well

- Good teaching successfully develops the children's confidence, ability to get on with others and willingness to make their own choices and decisions.
- Children who have particular needs, especially in language and in learning, achieve well because of good group and individual teaching and a good quality nursery experience.
- It has good links with parents and other agencies.

What could be improved

- The ways to foster and develop the children's early reading, writing and number skills.
- The process of deciding how well the school is doing and where it can improve.
- The challenge for the higher attaining children.
- Written information on the nursery's procedures for the care and safety of the children.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The nursery has made satisfactory improvement since the inspection in 1998. It has sustained strengths in the provision for children with special educational needs, in the children's good progress especially in personal, social and emotional development, and in its partnership with parents. However, it has not kept full pace with developments in nursery education nationally and the quality of the provision is not now as high as it was. This is most evident in the missed opportunities to develop the children's literacy skills and mathematical awareness, and in the limited work with parents on how to help their children. The teaching is good but there is little very good and excellent teaching as judged in

the last inspection. The teaching and classrooms lack the spark to really fire the children's learning. The action to deal with the three key issues has not been completely effective. Good progress has been made in raising the profile of physical development in outdoor play which is a growing strength of the nursery. It is not always clear what the children are expected to gain from activities or how the staff help the children see the purpose of them. Although the staff keep track of what is happening in their areas of responsibility, they are tentative in identifying where things need to improve, especially in the quality of teaching and learning. This is slowing the development of higher quality provision. The recent addition of a parents' room, and the outreach work by the teachers in the assessment unit, are positive steps towards fulfilling the headteacher's aim of working even more closely with others.

STANDARDS

The children make good progress over the year. When they leave the nursery, most are doing as well as, and in some aspects better than, expected for their age.

Personal, social and emotional development

The children achieve well. Many show good maturity in their levels of concentration, the way they work with others and in how they select what they wish to do. Nevertheless, a number rely heavily on adults to guide them.

Communication, language and literacy

Many of the children are articulate, fluent speakers who converse easily. Others find it harder to negotiate, plan and explain what they have done. All enjoy rhymes and stories and listen attentively. Most children recognise their name and many write some or all of it unaided. They know letters of the alphabet and their sounds and some willingly have a go at writing them. The higher attaining children could achieve even more in reading and writing words and sentences. Children with delayed speech, and speech difficulties, make good progress because of regular sessions with adults to rehearse speech sounds and patterns. The children who have English as an additional language show good progress in understanding and using English words, phrases and sentences. The children in the assessment unit make good progress in using pictures, word cues and signals to communicate with others.

Mathematical development

Most of the children have a sound awareness of pattern, shape and size. They count accurately to 10, some to 20 and even higher. They recognise numerals and match them correctly to small collections of objects. They are not as confident in solving simple number problems.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Many of the children have good general knowledge and are curious about what things are and how they work. The children know that things change over time. They knew that a tadpole was on the way to becoming a frog when its back legs appeared. Many confidently use the computer mouse to click on icons and to move the screen cursor. They know how to give instructions to a programmable toy and make it move.

Physical development

Nearly all the children know how to use a range of tools and equipment. However, when using wheeled toys outdoors, not all know how to adjust their speed and control the toys safely. Many show good coordination as they move around confidently. A small number hopped and swirled their arms to move scarves over their heads as they danced. Few skip or catch and throw balls consistently, but most show developing dexterity when using scissors or screwing nuts.

Creative development

Many of the children know how to mix colours. They explore and combine different materials and media, including paper, card and wood. They sing a range of songs from memory and use different props to create their own stories and scenes.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; the children enjoy coming to nursery, are very interested in what each day brings and are willing to try new things.
Behaviour	Good; most behave very well although a few take advantage when they are not closely supervised.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; the children get on well with each other and with adults; many have developed friendships and happily make their own decisions about what to do.
Attendance	Good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Several features typify the good teaching that fosters the children's good learning;

- the effective partnership of the teachers and learning assistants gives the children good support and guidance across the curriculum;
- the adults plan and prepare conscientiously and sessions run smoothly;
- the staff provide interesting indoor and outdoor activities that foster the children's confidence and develop their learning through first hand experience;
- the adults' questions and suggestions encourage the children to think and talk about what they have seen and done;
- children with special educational needs thrive because the adults recognise their needs and provide effective step-by-step programmes that build gradual success.

The adults do not always expect the most of the children, particularly as the nursery year moves on. As the children frequently choose what they do, a small number can avoid particular activities or occupy themselves with things they know well. The challenge in the activities is sometimes too low, especially for the higher attaining children. Chances are missed to use the skills and expertise of the adults to build systematically on what the children already know and can do, particularly in reading, writing and number.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; there is strong emphasis on learning through play and experience in a changing range of activities indoors and out. The development of early reading, writing and number is too low key.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good; individual needs are recognised and well met through adult support and specialist input, especially in speech and communication.

Provision for children with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; specialist teaching programmes help to develop the children's use of new words and phrases. The nursery staff do not always reinforce these programmes well enough to ensure that the children understand and use the words and phrases.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; the staff foster well the children's awareness of rules, respect and care for each other and sense of belonging. The nursery is not as strong in developing the children's awareness of their own learning and achievements or their knowledge of their local heritage.
How well the school cares for its children	Satisfactory; the staff know the children very well and how they are developing. All show care and concern for the children.

Chances are missed to use themes even more effectively to link the children's learning across the curriculum and to set new challenges, especially for the higher attaining children. As welfare policies and procedures have not been formally agreed, there is considerable potential for inconsistency and misunderstanding in the care and welfare of the children. The parents are highly supportive of the school. Several help in the nursery, and many attend workshops and come to social functions.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; the headteacher leads the team by example and has managed well the development of outreach services for other pre-school agencies. Procedures to develop the quality of work in the nursery are not so strong.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive; they do more than is expected of them, given that they have only part authority for the nursery.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; informal systems keep everyone up-to-date but there is too little critical analysis of the quality of teaching and learning to provide secure information on how well the school is meeting its aims and where improvements can be made.
The strategic use of resources	Sound; specialist expertise is being used well to support children with particular needs. The regular use of outdoor areas broadens the range of activities. Reserve funds and raised money are sensibly earmarked to furnish the recently built parents' room.

The extension to the purpose-built nursery provides needed flexibility for one-to-one and small group sessions. The nursery has an excellent range of learning resources. It seeks best value in goods and services, but is only just beginning to use information critically to decide how well it is doing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teaching is good. Their children like school. They feel comfortable approaching the school with concerns. 	<p>No significant concerns were raised.</p> <p>A small percentage of parents felt they are not well enough informed about how their children are getting on.</p>

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school helps their children become mature.• They like being able to take books home. | |
|---|--|

The parents' overwhelmingly positive views reflect what the school does well. The children develop in confidence and maturity because the teachers encourage them to choose their own activities and follow agreed routines. The lending library is well used. The nursery could do more to ensure that working parents are kept as informed as those who meet the staff when they bring and collect their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Good teaching successfully develops the children's confidence, ability to get on with others and willingness to make their own choices and decisions.

1. Three key strengths of the nursery are the good quality of the teaching, the commitment of the staff to the children and their depth of knowledge of each child and how well they are progressing. These strengths were recognised by the parents. All of the parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the teaching in the nursery is good, and ninety-five per cent agreed strongly. Parents also commented on the warmth, friendliness and very caring attitude shown by the staff who make the nursery a happy place that their children enjoy very much. In eleven of the 18 sessions seen, 61 per cent, the teaching was good, and in one session, it was very good. The overall good quality of the teaching promotes the children's learning across the curriculum but is best exemplified in the development of the children's personal, social and emotional skills. As highlighted in the last inspection, this has a positive influence on the progress and attainment of the children during their time at the nursery.
2. All the children start in the nursery in the autumn term and for many, it is the first time they have been with a large number of other children. The staff place high emphasis on helping newcomers to settle into the nursery and to get used to the routines and to being one of a group. The staff work very well as a team to help the children become used to the layout and organisation of the nursery, the timetable for the week, and to all the adults who work at or regularly visit Wyndham Park. Their observations of the children and the concerns they note form the basis for possible programmes of action and discussion with parents.
3. Two good features of the teaching are firstly, the inclusion of the children in the assessment unit in the life of the nursery and secondly, the high degree of consistency of approach between the staff so the children in the three classes experience the same things. The children in the assessment unit follow a similar routine to that of the other two classes so that they have outdoor play with the other children, activities they choose for themselves, group times and periods of one-to-one work with an adult. Throughout the nursery, the staff are successful in establishing clear codes of conduct for the children, such as the expectation that the children will help to tidy away what they have been using. This is made easier by labelled boxes and specific storage places that help the children learn where everything goes.
4. A key strand of the work of the nursery is the focus on the children's choice of what they wish to do and their independence in organising their own activities. The parents commented on how well their children had developed in self-reliance and willingness to have a go at new things. The adults often work with the children to introduce them to new materials and techniques and then allow them the freedom to develop their own ideas. At such times, the teachers show good skill in knowing when to intervene and when not. They encourage the children to be self-sufficient and reinforce the children's efforts through comments such as, "A good try – I'm pleased if you try". They treat the children with respect, reassure them when things go awry and provide a good model in their own behaviour of how they expect the children to treat others. When one child let go of a trailer with another child in and it rolled backwards into a wall, a teacher was quick to comfort the passenger and then to take the other child on one side and talk quietly about what had happened and why. This helped to restore

the confidence of the children who had been rather frightened by the event, and also served to renew the boundaries of expected behaviour.

5. The adults prompt the children to help others. When an assistant said, "Give her a pot to put her things in", one girl quickly found a small tray for another who was struggling to carry bits of material from a trolley to the table. Similarly, one child echoed an adult in saying to another, "Can you move that up a bit please?" as she tried to fit her paper onto the table and found others' papers in the way.
6. The adults also help the children to work with others cooperatively and to share resources. The teacher's comment, "See if ... would like to help you", led to three children working together to use brushes and buckets of water outdoors to "paint" the paving stones. Having talked to them initially about what they might do, the teacher left them to develop their play but kept an eye on what they did. When she realised that they were becoming frustrated when their water dried in the strong sunshine before they had individually finished one paving stone, she suggested they could all work on one stone. As a result, the children organised themselves so that one did the central part while the other two tackled the outer bits and showed much delight in having a completely wet stone. They were highly engrossed for at least 15 minutes painting stones and stanchions.
7. This good level of cooperation, collaboration and concentration also typified other activities and reflects the effective work of the staff over the past two terms to promote good relationships between the children and to develop their autonomy and interest in learning. For example, three boys enthusiastically showed each other how they were making bubbles in the water tray with whisks, tubes and containers. They then began to work together. While one held a tube, another carefully poured in water from a jug and a third whisked the water as it came out. Their laughter and eagerness to repeat the process showed well their high level of motivation and feelings of success.
8. Teachers' planning shows that over the terms, the staff raise their expectations of the children's ability to take care of their own needs and to make their own decisions. A good example is the procedure related to snack time. The children choose when they wish to have a drink and a snack, and need very little adult supervision as they have learnt the routines of placing their used mug in a bowl and removing their name from the board to show they have had their snack. They also know what to do when there is a spillage. One boy quickly got a cloth and dealt with an upset mug of milk. Similarly, in the assessment unit, the children know where they sit, know the routine followed by the helper of the day and know to pour their own drink when the jug comes round. Because the procedures are so well established, the children make little fuss and often supervise each other.
9. Such initiative on the children's part, and confidence in knowing what to do, is also highly evident in how the nursery operates. The children know the routines of the day and what is expected of them, so they often pre-empt the adults' instructions. For instance, when told it is time for outdoor play, the children put on their coats and stand in line waiting to go outside. They have learnt how to do up buttons and zips and when they have difficulty, quietly go to an adult for help. A small number need to be chivvied to tidy away and get ready, sometimes because they are engrossed in what they are doing, but most respond positively to instructions from the adults and also from other children who are quick to point out what ought to be happening.

10. The structured routines of the day and positive attitude of the staff explain in large part the good progress of the children in the assessment unit in getting on increasingly well with others and their increasing ability to make their wants known. For example, the use of pictures and objects allows the children to indicate their choice of activity. The staff know the children's personalities and behaviours extremely well and their daily observations and shared discussions of the children's responses give them a secure awareness of what to repeat, extend and try next. They manage the children very well and are particularly skilled in calming and diverting them, and also in knowing when to increase or to slacken the challenge. They are lavish in their shared praise and encouragement when positive change is noted, such as one child voluntarily selecting a song for all to sing, and this creates a positive atmosphere in the unit.

Children who have particular needs, especially in language and in learning, achieve well because of good group and individual teaching and a good quality nursery experience.

11. Through their work with small groups of children, the staff are quick to identify those who give rise to concern because of learning problems or because of aspects of speech delay, speech problems or reluctance to speak. They are also aware of the children who do not have English as their first language and who need specialist support in learning English. The nursery is also prompt to contact other agencies, such as health visitors and speech therapists, and to organise relevant support as part of the nursery programme. Several parents praised the "excellent assistance" shown by the nursery staff to help their children's speech development and commented on how this had resulted in their children coming on "in leaps and bounds".
12. The special needs coordinators manage this strand of the nursery's work efficiently. The two part-time special needs teachers in the assessment unit share the role of special needs coordinator for the nursery. They have a good range of experience and expertise, particularly in working with autistic children, and this places the nursery in a strong position to develop its work in supporting other pre-school settings. The records for the children who have been identified as having particular needs give a detailed picture of realistic targets, the programme of activities and the children's progress. For a significant number of children, the programme involves visiting specialists as well as the support in the nursery, and all is well coordinated and organised.
13. The headteacher and governors have recognised the importance of developing the children's language and are making efficient use of some of the hours of a classroom assistant to provide good quality one-to-one support for children with speech and language problems. The assistant works closely with the speech therapists to provide structured activities that foster the children's use of words and phrases, and help to develop their articulation of particular sounds. The children enjoy these short sessions and respond positively to the games and shared activities such as "posting" cards in the right box according to the initial sound of an item. One child improved in clarity in pronouncing sounds when the assistant showed enunciation carefully and demonstrated how to position her tongue.
14. The children who are learning English as an additional language also enjoy their sessions with a visiting teacher. In sessions, two children showed a developing understanding of prepositions when asked to place a teddy on and under a toy bed.

The repetition of phrases such as "Where is he now?" also prompted them to use the terms themselves.

15. All the children benefit from day-to-day activities as well as class, group and individual sessions with the different adults who work in the nursery. Most listen carefully to the adults when they explain or when they introduce something new. They also listen attentively to stories and often join in with repeating phrases. For some of the children in the assessment unit, the echoing of the phrase, "Oh dear!" was a clear sign of their awareness of a favourite storyline. As many children are drawn to activities where an adult is working, they become involved in discussing what is happening and benefit from the adult's explanations and help given for specific children. This was evident when an assistant, signing for a hearing impaired child, talked about the fruit on the snack table, initial sounds and words, and other children joined in the conversation.
16. The frequent use by all the staff of phrases such as "Good looking" or "Good listening", along with smiles and a reassuring touch, rewards the children and also reinforces desired behaviours and responses. This is seen at its best in the assessment unit where the children have very specific and individual learning needs.
17. A prime strength of the work of the assessment unit is the way the curriculum is planned so that the children are making progress towards those early learning goals (*the standards expected of children at the end of the reception year*) that the staff feel are realistic and achievable. The staff's detailed knowledge of the children enables them to plan very specific individual programmes with precise targets especially in the children's understanding of language and their developing skill in communicating with others. During group and individual sessions, the adults make very effective use of photographs, pictures, songs and objects as well as spoken commentary to indicate what they want the children to do and to help them respond. Over time this has led to the children showing good and in some cases, very good progress in responding to others and occasionally initiating contact with them. For example, when a teacher acted as shopkeeper, three children used shopping lists to place items such as an apple and a biscuit into their basket before giving their penny as payment. As they were doing this, the teacher and the support assistant were praising every correct action. The children knew they had done well and this was an effective, rewarding session for adults and children alike.

It has good links with parents and other agencies.

18. The parents are very supportive of the nursery. In their responses to the questionnaire, and in their comments at the meetings with the registered inspector, the parents were full of praise for "*the welcoming, approachable, friendly attitude*" of the staff (parent's comment). One hundred per cent of the parents who returned the questionnaire agreed, and ninety per cent strongly agreed, that they felt comfortable approaching the school with concerns. Their confidence and ease were evident during the inspection, when at the start and end of morning and afternoon sessions, the parents came into the nursery and chatted freely with staff about events at home and school, and about their children's progress. The good, informal relationships between the staff and the parents add considerably to the relaxed atmosphere in the nursery, and in large part explain the nursery's success in meeting its prime aim to provide "*a warm, caring and friendly environment for children and adults*".
19. The nursery staff welcome the parents' involvement in the life of the nursery and seek their help in keeping things running smoothly. During the inspection, several parents worked with groups of children. Others talked of how they had accompanied the

children on their walk in the park or were helping out by doing jobs at home, such as altering the tapes on new aprons to make it easier for the children to fasten them.

20. The good links between parents and staff begin before the children start in the nursery. Parents commented on the personal touch that came with the information evening at the nursery and then the visits made by the staff to the children at home. These gave the parents confidence in the staff and eased their concerns about their children starting nursery education. Many parents also commented on the way staff appreciated the parents' worries and went out of their way to reassure parents by letting them stay for a short while in the first days, and by having a quick "Don't worry" chat when parents came to collect their children.
21. When the children leave the nursery, the parents receive a comprehensive report on their children's progress over the year. The detail and overview in the reports and assessments are also appreciated by the primary schools. Many children meet their teacher before they leave the nursery as there is a strong, well-established liaison with the primary schools. The nursery staff encourage the parents to visit the primaries and also welcome the reception class teachers to meet the children in the nursery. Useful collaboration between the nursery and schools in how to keep records of the children's progress and how to develop curriculum strands, such as mathematics, have strengthened the effectiveness of the links.
22. The staff of the assessment unit have good liaison with the parents and the differing agencies that support the children. They keep parents informed via home/school books and informal chats and invite them to the reviews of their children's progress when they have a chance to hear from the different specialists involved and to see how they can be involved in the programme. This good practice is followed throughout the nursery for children with special needs. The children's records pull together well the strands from the differing agencies and show that the new programme is understood and agreed by all, and where helpful, for specialists to work with parents. For example, during the inspection, a teacher for the deaf was helping parents of a hearing impaired child to learn how to sign words they would need for their coming holiday.
23. A very good feature of the work of the assessment unit is the way the staff work with the teachers at the local school. They regularly take the children to the coffee bar to help them become familiar with the school layout, the staff and procedures. This smoothes the transition for the children very well.
24. Regular newsletters keep all parents updated on events and the headteacher has responded to parents' queries by organising workshops on areas of particular interest. Parents described the workshop on managing children's behaviour as "excellent". It had enabled them to discuss how to say "No" to their children. Parents also valued the workshops on literacy and numeracy, and many make good use of the lending library to borrow books to share with their children at home.
25. The strong willingness of the parents to support the nursery is highly evident in their good attendance at special events and in the considerable funds raised. Over £1000 was raised by asking people to sponsor the children with their sunflower pictures last year. Such support helped the nursery to create the garden area, extend the range of books in the lending library and to contribute to the furnishing of the new parents' room.

26. A key priority in the improvement plan for this year is the development of the nursery as a source of information and support for parents and pre-school groups, especially in the education of children with special educational needs. This has been a long-standing aim of the headteacher and the completion of the parents' room provides the nursery with needed space to hold meetings and to display information. Likewise, the appointment since April of an additional teacher, with expertise in the teaching of young children with special educational needs, has enabled the nursery to offer support to other groups. Although it is just getting off the ground, this work offers much potential to enhance the reputation of the nursery.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The ways to foster and develop the children's early reading, writing and number skills.

27. The staff place high emphasis on the development of the children's speaking and listening skills and make effective use of class, group and individual sessions to question, converse with and talk to the children. They draw the children into discussions and encourage them to offer their opinions. As a result, many are confident, lively speakers who are fluent and articulate in describing what they have done. Many interact easily with adults and other children. Most enjoy stories, rhymes and songs and the staff lead these times well. During the telling of "Alpaca in the park", the children listened attentively and offered spontaneous comments on what they heard and saw in the pictures. Likewise, the children in the assessment unit joined in with the words, tune and actions to "The wheels on the bus" and "old MacDonald".
28. The same level of attainment and progress for most children is less evident in the early learning goals for linking sounds and letters, reading, writing, handwriting and calculating. This is because the introduction of challenge is often too slow and the range of experiences for the children is limited. The teachers' curriculum plans show increasing challenge for the children as the year moves on with a gradual introduction of resources and activities. This is good practice but in the areas of reading, writing and mathematical development, not enough is done on a day-to-day basis to foster the children's awareness and their use of print and number processes.
29. There is very little in the nursery environment to support literacy and numeracy. For example, the rooms have numbers 0 to 10 on view but not an alphabet which would provide the children with visual support for letter recognition and letter formation. During the inspection, few children were seen to spend time looking at books and telling stories to each other. The classroom book areas are poor and unattractive. Limited use is made of resources, such as cushions, small tables and chairs to create a stimulating and enticing book area. Similarly, the staff make little use of soft toys, puppets, story washing-lines and taped stories to encourage the children to listen to, retell and share stories. There is little use of non-fiction books and other texts, such as magazines, recipe cards, instruction manuals, map books and pattern books to catch the children's interest and to support their work in the different areas of the nursery.
30. The parents make good use of the lending library and children's comments show that many have favourite books and like reading, but the nursery's good collection of Big Books and accompanying books tends to remain in store until needed rather than available to the children to rehearse known stories. The staff comment that they usually include reading and writing materials as part of role play settings but during

the inspection, chances were missed to incorporate the use of print in “The three bears’ cottage” and to build on the children’s interest through links such as a collection of stories of the same tale or books and information about bears. This also applies to the displays throughout the nursery.

31. The children learn to recognise and write their name as part of nursery procedures, such as self-registration and labelling their paintings. Some children are quick to learn not only how to write their first name but also their surname and the staff work with them to do so. However, many children are learning to form letters incorrectly and guidance is needed for staff and parents on how to help the children acquire correct movements. There are few activities to help the children practise letters regularly although occasionally relevant resources such as salt trays are used.
32. The nursery has been slow to pick up on some of the good practice now seen nationally to promote the children’s writing skills and to give them purposes for writing, especially as part of the activities in the nursery. For example, chances were missed to show the children how to record the steps in programming a toy to move along the floor or in making a list of what they needed to plant seeds.
33. The children have made good progress in learning about letters and sounds. Several children spontaneously commented on letters in their name and other words when their teacher used “The Big a b c Book”. They knew the first few letters and were quick to spot and to hear initial and final sounds in words, but there were no activities planned for the day that built on this experience.
34. This also typifies the children’s learning in number and in the early learning goals for calculating. The children count reliably and recognise numbers to ten, and higher when an adult helps. They needed little help to fix number tiles together in the right order or to stack the right number of rings on a number board. However, there is little to challenge their awareness and use of number in everyday situations or to develop their use of different ways to solve a problem. As in literacy, the nursery has not kept pace with national developments or acted sufficiently on recent guidance for parents. There is too little to encourage the children to solve simple number problems or to apply their number knowledge in games and challenges in the adult led activities and in the children’s play indoors and out.

The process of deciding how well the school is doing and where it can improve.

35. The governors, headteacher and staff work together to decide the priorities for the year and how the nursery may make best use of the funds devolved to it to support its improvement plans and the programme of professional development for the staff. However, they have little information about the effectiveness of the nursery to help them identify areas for improvement or to decide how well they provided value for the £3900 spent per child last year. This sum is considerably higher than in many nursery schools.
36. The school is new to the process of analysing critically all available information to evaluate how well it meets its aims and to determine the value it adds to the children’s learning. This is partly because of the lack of information about other nursery schools although the governors have some knowledge of other local pre-school settings. The governors are highly committed to Wyndham Park. Several use good working

knowledge of the nursery and the assessment unit from their work with the children to keep others informed. This good first hand information on the quality of education is used well by the governors but they have yet to set it alongside other information to justify their views of the nursery's strengths and also to identify areas for improvement.

37. The work done last year by the headteacher in looking at the progress of the children in her group in mathematics sets a good precedent in analysing performance data. The school recognises that it now has efficient systems to record and track the children's progress in identified skills and areas of experience from the start to the end of the nursery year. This gives useful information on gaps in learning as well as rates of progress that they are using to make curriculum changes. When this information is put alongside the teachers' planning, the staff have a useful tool to make changes for next year in the activities, role of the adults and expected outcomes.
38. Although the school has a three-year development plan, there is little to indicate the areas of focus for the next two years or to show how this year's plan fits into longer-term intentions. The plan gives a good outline of what is to be done but does not provide clear details of who is keeping an overview of the action being taken and how the impact of the action is being evaluated. The headteacher keeps the governors updated each term on what has been done but does not indicate the effect of the action on the quality of what the nursery provides. This is of increasing importance now that the parents' room is ready for use and the governors have an opportunity to assess how well its use is meeting the expressed aim of working more closely with parents and other agencies.
39. In September 2001, the introduction of performance targets for each teacher has heightened the headteacher's role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning particularly in respect of progress towards the agreed targets and the identification of points for improvement. As yet, observations of the staff at work are not providing enough information to identify common areas of strength or areas for common improvement. The nursery does not have a formally agreed programme of observations of staff, children or activities. Inspection evidence shows that there are many times when adults are not deployed effectively or opportunities to use their skills in observing the children are not taken. The nursery also has an extensive collection of resources but they are often poorly organised and stored and teachers' long term planning does not always indicate how resources may come in and out of use to reflect the children's developing skills.
40. Although the teachers are reflective and self-critical, they remain tentative in reviewing their own and others' teaching and this tentativeness is slowing the process of improvement. Too much relies on impressions rather than good evidence. For example, the nursery judges the children's attendance to be good but does not monitor attendance nor aggregate figures.

The challenge for the higher attaining children.

41. Over the year, as well as taking part in new experiences, the children have many opportunities to repeat and rehearse activities they have done previously. The teachers' planning shows attention to the development of skills and competences as well as knowledge but the teachers' expectations of the children are not always high enough to ensure that the children, especially the higher attaining, make the best progress. This is partly because the staff tend to wait for the children to be ready to

do things rather than actively and consciously foster and promote the children's learning.

42. In the last inspection, the team reported that the staff did not make *"the most efficient use of their considerable teaching skills because much of the teaching is carried out on a one-to-one basis with children who can choose whether or not they participate in many of the activities on offer"* (paragraph 11). This still holds some truth in that the children select activities and decide the length of time they stay. Although the teachers decide the focus of the activities by their selection of the resources, they do not consistently make it clear in their planning or in their discussions with the children, what they wish the children to gain from each activity. In contrast, those activities led by adults are planned in detail with clear learning intentions. However, as in any one session, the children may work on their own for much of the activity time, there is little to drive their learning forward. Occasionally, the teachers pose the children a problem. When the children explained how they had used marbles in paint trays to create patterns, the teacher asked them if the same would happen if they used bigger balls. One or two children suggested that it would also need bigger and deeper trays but they were not able to try out their ideas.
43. The teachers keep track of the children's progress in acquiring skills such as using scissors. Checklists provide a good overview of selected elements in the stages of progression but do not give a full picture of each child's development in all the early learning goals or the rate of progress. Consequently, the teachers do not always identify the next step in the child's learning and use it to guide their planning, especially when revisiting topics for a second time. Similarly, the teachers do not always make the best use of current themes and topics to provide a meaningful purpose for the children to apply and use their skills. Chances are missed to set specific problems and targets to channel the children's thinking and attention while still leaving them scope to decide how to organise and plan out what they do. Occasionally the children do this themselves. For example, having made brown by mixing colours, one child decided to paint one of the bears from the tale of "Goldilocks and the three bears."

The information on the procedures relating to the care and safety of the children.

44. The nursery staff show a high level of care and concern for the welfare of the children. They comfort children and deal competently with incidents and accidents. All staff have undertaken training in first aid and there are agreed procedures for treating children, contacting parents and recording the event. These procedures were effectively and calmly put into practice during the inspection. Similarly, daily practices and procedures ensure that there is always adequate supervision of the children indoors and out, and that incidents are dealt with in an appropriate way. The headteacher and governors take seriously the safety of all in the nursery. They conduct periodic health and safety checks, ensure that outside services regularly test equipment and deal with problems. They also took effective steps to minimise the impact of the recent building work on the life of the nursery and are aware of the need for some minor works, such as finger safes on new doors.
45. However, as the nursery lacks formally agreed guidelines to cover all aspects of the health, welfare and safety of the children, there is considerable potential for inconsistency and misunderstanding in what is done. Likewise, as there is no formally agreed schedule to review, evaluate and update procedures, there are a few

gaps that lessen the overall effectiveness. For example, while an extensive risk assessment was carried out in relation to the nursery garden, the same has not been done in relation to the areas of provision in the nursery. There is too little information, either on display or readily available, to indicate the policy and procedures agreed by the governors on matters, such as the restraint of children and child protection. Although the permanent staff know well what to do, the nursery has little to inform visitors and temporary staff about the procedures followed in the nursery and how they affect them.

46. Although the staff keep records of the children's attendance, there is no agreed system to collate information daily or to record those children who come after and/or leave the nursery before the agreed start and end times. Parents are very conscientious in letting the staff know when their children are unable to attend, but the nursery is slow to contact families when there is an unexplained absence.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. To build on the quality and to continue the programme of school improvement, the managing committee, headteachers and staff should:

- (1) raise the profile of reading, writing and mathematics in the nursery by strengthening the quality of teaching, increasing the use of print and number in displays and day-to-day routines and by providing more opportunities for the children to share and use books, write and solve mathematical problems;
(paragraphs 27-34)
- (2) analyse more critically information from a range of sources, including the monitoring of teaching and learning, to identify the factors that account for the nursery's success and to pinpoint where improvements need to be made, who will be responsible and what is expected of them;
(paragraphs 35-40)
- (3) raise the staff's expectations of what the children can do and ensure that the teachers set targets and plan challenges for those children who have already achieved the standard expected, especially when activities are revisited;
(paragraphs 41-43)
- (4) ensure that relevant policies on the care, welfare and safety of the children are in place to guide those who work in the school.
(paragraphs 44-46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed

18

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	1	10	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	6	56	39	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of sessions observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each session represents more than five 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)	56
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56

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a
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n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Nursery

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
---	---

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18
---	----

18

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4
---	---

4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
--	---

0

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0
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0

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	n/a
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School data	n/a
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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)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14

Total number of education support staff (FTE)	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	219,107
Total expenditure	215,020
Expenditure per pupil	3,909
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,310
Balance carried forward to next year	8,397

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	112
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	90	10	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	26	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	79	21	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	85	15	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	95	5	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	21	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	10	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	31	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	31	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	90	10	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	10	5	3	21

Several parents commented positively on the support for children with hearing and speech difficulties.