

INSPECTION REPORT

PURLEY NURSERY SCHOOL

Purley, Surrey

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101704

Headteacher: Mrs Marion Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs Marsha Walton
21163

Dates of inspection: 29 - 31 October 2001

Inspection number: 230528

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 – 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	58 Pampisford Road Purley Surrey CR8 2NE
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Appropriate authority:	Croydon Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Meldon-Smith
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21163	Marsha Walton	Registered inspector	Mathematical development	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
			Creative development	
			Personal, social and emotional development	
			Special educational needs	
09075	Juliet Baxter	Lay Inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Knowledge and understanding of the world	
			Physical development	
			Equal opportunities	
			English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Purley Nursery School has been in existence since 1946 and is very well regarded locally. There has been a full complement of 120 boys and girls for many years, all attending the morning or afternoon sessions. However, the increase in local day care facilities and, more recently, the opening of additional nursery provision in classes attached to local primary schools has had a dramatic effect on the demand for places. Currently 81 children, coming from a wide geographical area and from a variety of backgrounds, attend the school part-time. They are admitted to the nursery in the September following their third birthday and stay for just one year, before moving on to primary school where they complete the Foundation Stage. Sixteen per cent come from minority ethnic groups but a few come from homes where English is not the first language. These figures are lower than at the time of the previous inspection. It is usual for about 13 per cent of pupils to be on the school's register of special educational needs, mainly for speech and language problems, but the process of identification is about to begin for those currently attending the school. The attainment of most children when they enter the nursery is as expected for their age, although there is wide variation. The school has just achieved the Investors in People Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective nursery where teaching is of consistently good quality. The inspection took place at a time when all the children had just settled into school but, in spite of this, their personal, social and emotional development is already of a very good standard and their behaviour is very good. Children's initiative, personal responsibility and relationships with each other and with staff are of excellent quality. Evidence from previous years indicates that children make good progress, about 25% of them attaining the Early Learning Goals by the end of their year in the nursery. Opportunities for learning created by the school are good, particularly in the areas of personal development, physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Clear educational direction is given by the knowledgeable headteacher who leads a very caring team. Strong partnership with parents is a high priority for the school and this is quickly established. This partnership works very effectively for the benefit of the children who all learn well, with obvious interest and enthusiasm. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. There are no significant weaknesses.

What the school does well

- Teaching is of consistently good quality and supports children's personal development very well.
- The partnership with parents is very good.
- There is a rich learning environment that is both stimulating and exciting for children; The very good accommodation and resources support children's learning.
- There is clear educational direction by the headteacher who leads a competent staff. They look after the children very well.
- Relationships between children, and between adults and children, are excellent.

What could be improved

- There are no main areas of weakness to be addressed.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, in March 1998, and strengths identified previously have been maintained. The quality of teaching has improved and assessment procedures have been completely overhauled. As a result, children's progress is good during the year they spend in the school. Previous key issues have been addressed at least satisfactorily. A better system for observing children and, consequently, making appropriate provision for them, has been implemented. Staff have worked hard to improve successfully the provision for all aspects of creative and mathematical development. Improvements in opportunities for cultural and spiritual development have been effective. There are good systems in place to allow children time to reflect upon their achievements. Resources in the school, as well as those available in the locality, reflect the cultural diversity of society. Staff work as a whole team of professionals, and information and expertise are freely shared. Governors are well informed and are thus able to steer the school's work and hold it to account.

STANDARDS

Most of the children in the school were three years old at the time of the inspection and all were new to the school. Judgements on standards are made from evidence of activities undertaken during the previous summer, by those who have now left the school, and on current attainment, although it is very early in the school year. Most children make good progress and are therefore on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year in primary school, but about a quarter will achieve these before they leave Purley Nursery School. Currently, standards in all areas of learning are as expected, with the exception of personal, social and emotional development. Here, standards are good and children have already made significant progress in a short time. They are well supported by a secure and nurturing environment, have settled successfully and already demonstrate considerable confidence, independence, and concentration. Most already display the higher levels of involvement in activities expected of older children in the nursery. Standards in early reading and the beginning of writing are at the expected level for children of this age. They are learning to listen and pay attention. They use mathematical language appropriately in their play, commensurate with the first 'stepping stone' of progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Overall, children are well prepared to start their reception year in primary school.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; children are enthusiastic and confidently involve themselves in activities that interest them.
Behaviour	Very good; children are sensible and behave well, both indoors and outside.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; children show high levels of independence, take responsibility and show initiative as they move freely in all areas of the nursery. They relate well to one another and to adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Children already exercise an excellent combination of initiative and personal responsibility as they move around the nursery. At the end of a session, they help with clearing up, are diligent

and do an excellent job. Relationships with staff are well established and of excellent quality. Children confidently select activities that interest them, they happily work alone or with others. They concentrate well, many persisting for extended periods of time in order to complete an activity or work it through to a conclusion that satisfies them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 3 – 4 years
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The teaching observed was of consistently good quality. This enables children to settle well, feel secure and make good progress. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The enthusiastic and committed staff provide a rich learning environment and a carefully planned range of activities, particularly for physical and personal development as well as knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching in all areas of learning is good, except in mathematical development where it is satisfactory. The management of children is very good and routines and procedures are already well established. Consequently, children's progress in personal independence is excellent, and the initiative and responsibility they exercise as they move around the nursery is well beyond that expected of children of their age. A marked strength of teaching is the high quality interaction between all staff and children, which is particularly sensitive to individual needs of children. Questioning is used to good effect; there is a calm unhurried atmosphere and every child is well known to staff. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants are equally skilled in the school's approach and make a very valuable contribution to children's learning. Children respond to this good teaching with enthusiasm and very good levels of concentration. They are often confident to try new things. The school provides well for the decreasing number of children who have English as an additional language, and those who have special educational needs receive good, closely-focused assistance.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; a rich learning environment, relevant and appropriate, enhances the nationally recommended curriculum. Good use is made of the locality and links with the community.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good; staff work sensitively, together with parents, to meet the needs of these children. As a consequence, they make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good; all staff sensitively support those in the early stages of English language acquisition and specialist help is also available.

Provision for children's personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; staff ensure children work and play happily together. There are good opportunities for children to show wonder and delight as well as to take time to reflect on their achievements or behaviour. They are aware of customs other than their own and all aspects of their social development are given high priority.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good; formal procedures as well as day-to-day care of individual children are very good. Staff work as a whole team and observations of children's needs and progress are regularly discussed and noted. Summaries of children's achievements are not yet made during the year.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; there is clear educational direction from the headteacher who also has a distinct view for the future work of the school. She has worked hard to effect necessary improvements at a time when recruitment of key staff to the school has been difficult.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; governors are well informed and are beginning to be involved with the work of the school on a regular basis. This gives them the necessary insight for influencing the future direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; the headteacher leads the whole staff team in regular evaluations of provision and of the outcomes of children's learning. Monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous to identify specific weaknesses or strengths in order to make sensible deployment of staff.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall; staffing is generous but its effective use needs to be monitored. Accommodation and learning resources are very good, used and cared for well by staff and children. The school applies principles of best value in all financial affairs.

The recruitment of suitable senior staff is currently proving difficult for the school. This has resulted in the headteacher undertaking a regular teaching commitment, which reduces the time available for management responsibilities. In addition, her team of support staff is completely new although they work well as a team of highly committed professionals and make a valuable contribution. The school invests in additional hours of assistance above those provided by the local education authority to ensure that there is equality of provision over both morning and afternoon sessions, and children with additional needs are well provided for. The nursery operates within very good accommodation, which is enhanced with displays of children's work and things that will interest them. Outside, there is ample space for imaginative, active and energetic play, for investigation and quieter activity.

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 children like coming to school. • Teaching is good and children are well prepared for primary school. • The school works very closely with parents and their concerns are taken seriously. • There is a nurturing atmosphere and a good range of learning opportunities both indoors and outside. • The school has appropriate expectations of good behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant concerns were noted but many parents felt unable to express a view so early in their child's experience of school. They expressed unhappiness at the timing of the inspection.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. The school places particular emphasis on settling children into school and staff are clearly successful in this. Although the inspection took place just after all the children had begun attending the school, good account has been taken of evidence from the previous year. The views of parents whose children had left the school were also made available to the team.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Almost all the children in the school were three years old at the time of the inspection and all were new to the school. Judgements on standards are made from evidence of activities undertaken during the previous summer, by those who have now left the school, and on current attainment although very early on in the children's year in the school.
2. Most children make good progress and are therefore well placed to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year in primary school; about a quarter will achieve these goals before they leave Purley Nursery. The sound standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. However, children's personal, social and emotional development has improved and standards are very good. Children have already made significant progress in a short time. They are well supported by a secure and nurturing environment, have settled into school successfully and already demonstrate considerable confidence, independence, and concentration. These aspects of children's development are excellent and most already display the higher levels of involvement in activities expected of older children in the nursery. Children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
3. Standards in communication, language and literacy are at the expected level for children of this age. Children are learning to listen and to pay attention. They are able to develop their own ideas through imaginative play and are well supported in this work by adults who join in enthusiastically. Language skills are well promoted and children are learning to ask questions. Children learning English as an additional language and those identified as having special educational needs receive the help they need. Some children already write their own names, using the appropriate upper and lower case letters. A minority are still at an early stage of attempting to form letters correctly.
4. Mathematical development is commensurate with the first 'stepping stones' of progress towards the Early Learning Goals for mathematics. Children use mathematical language appropriately in their play. They are learning well from the many different activities set up for them, a few of which focus on mathematical development. Children successfully use number labels to identify where equipment should go and they are aware of the properties of shape and space in construction and creative work. They make general comparisons of size in conversation and measure the length of their turn at an activity with a sand timer. Later in the year, further routines will be introduced to give regular practice in early number skills. All children are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year in primary school.
5. Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are at an appropriate level for children of this age. The children are observant and notice similarities and differences in a wide range of materials; they explore the natural environment and also investigate manufactured objects. They are increasingly aware of life cycles and observe various stages of development first hand, such as changes in tadpoles, caterpillars and ducklings reared in the nursery. The children develop skills effectively, when using tools and implements to create models. They have confidence in using a computer and tape recorder.

6. Standards of physical development are also appropriate for children of this age. Children use a variety of wheeled toys effectively in their play. They are learning to push, pull and propel themselves along and negotiate space, obstacles, and other children. There is a good variety of climbing equipment, which the children use well to climb, balance and jump. They extend their skills and they are making good progress towards the Early Learning Goals for physical development.
7. Children's standards of creative development are appropriate for their age, but in some areas they have already begun to make good progress beyond the first 'stepping stones' leading to the Early Learning Goals. Most can differentiate colours, show an interest in the way things feel, smell and sound, and participate well in imaginative play. A few more mature children have progressed beyond these early 'stepping stones' to the next steps or beyond. They make constructions, collages and pictures that involve fitting and overlapping shapes, and they recognise how sounds can be changed.
8. Through careful observation and informal discussion, staff know all the children well. All staff are aware of the individual learning needs of all the children in the nursery. Those who need extra help to settle happily in the nursery are treated sensitively and skilfully. Children with special educational needs are enabled to make good progress because they receive generous support and attention, and there is consistent reinforcement towards their individual targets. Those who are at an early stage of English language acquisition are similarly well supported by all the staff and a specialist assistant. The help that all children with particular learning requirements receive enables them to participate fully in all the activities and opportunities the nursery affords. New assessment procedures were introduced following the previous inspection. A cycle of observations is now included, after which a target is set for the child. Regular summaries of progress towards the Early Learning Goals have yet to be introduced but when this is done, assessment procedures will be complete and be very useful when reporting to parents and planning activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Although the inspection took place very early in the school year, it is immediately evident on arrival that this is an active, busy and happy school community. These very young children are friendly and relaxed when welcoming visitors to their school. They talk freely about themselves and about what they find interesting and absorbing in their lessons. They make good use of all the many activities presented to them for their learning and enjoyment and concentrate very well, as they become fully involved in their chosen activities. For example, one small girl spent a long time carefully selecting different coloured paints to create all the colours of a rainbow. Their attitudes are positive throughout their half-day sessions and their enthusiasm is infectious. They are well motivated and not afraid to try out new activities and challenges. This positive approach to learning at such a young age is undoubtedly a strong factor in the good progress they make.
10. Behaviour throughout the school is very good and children clearly understand the standards of behaviour expected of them. They know the difference between right and wrong and respond well to the demands of the school's behaviour policy. All adults implement this corporately and consistently. In the short time that they have been a part of the school community, the children have adapted well to the routines and procedures that ensure the smooth running of the school on a daily basis. This provides a secure framework for the very good behaviour that is exhibited at all times. Where a small

number of children have defined behavioural problems, all staff handle them skilfully and firmly, frequently using diversionary tactics to many of the interesting activities on offer.

11. Relationships between children, and between children and staff, are excellent. Children trust the adults who teach and look after them and they flourish in the caring and happy environment created for them. Children get on well together even at this early stage in their education. They frequently spend long periods of time working alongside each other at various activities. They share resources well and are surprisingly mature in the way they chat to each other and appreciate what their peers achieve. This co-operation and sharing is a significant factor in the development of their speaking and listening skills.
12. Children's personal development is very good. This is an aspect of the school's work that has been given prominence this term and it is already bearing fruit. For children of this young age their self-discipline is remarkable. They take responsibility for clearing up at the end of sessions and do not need to be asked by staff, it is something they do automatically. They are helpful and seem to know instinctively that the more they contribute to the running of the school in this way the better their experiences in the classrooms will be.
13. In the short time spent by children in Purley Nursery School they make swift and good progress, preparing them well for moving on to primary school. This is due in no uncertain way to their enthusiastic attitudes, very good behaviour and mature personal development.
14. Attendance in the school is satisfactory and children are eager to come to school. Registers are completed correctly in accordance with statutory requirements and a note of each child's rate of attendance is passed on to their next educational establishment. There is no legal requirement in this particular education authority for the nursery school to calculate and report its annual percentage rate of attendance and absence. Thus it has no means of comparing its attendance figures with similar schools. The school sees the value of such a comparison as an annual exercise and intends to record these figures in future. Punctuality is generally satisfactory, although in the morning sessions some children arrive late because their parents deliver older siblings to school first. This is not a problem in afternoon sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection some three and a half years ago. It is of consistently good quality and stems from good knowledge and expertise and a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for enabling young children to learn well. A child's association with the nursery begins with a home visit by the staff, and the school places great value on the teaching role of parents in their child's education. Books are taken home on a regular basis, as are the children's 'special books': a collection of recorded achievements primarily selected by the children themselves. This generates a sense of pride and children look forward to talking about the events and claiming success from 'What I used to be like'. Teachers' and assistants' enthusiasm is infectious and nearly all the children arrive at school in happy anticipation. As the year progresses, all areas of learning are given due emphasis but, appropriately, at the time of the inspection, attention to children's personal, social and emotional development was given priority.
16. Good teaching has already resulted in a good rate of progress. Staff set excellent role models for children: they talk calmly and politely giving their full attention in any

conversation. Children feel valued and secure as a result. Close attention is constantly given to high expectations of behaviour, to opportunities for responsibility and to nursery routines. For instance, staff say, 'Show me good walking in the nursery', 'Now wash your hands', and 'Would you like to wait for a turn?'. This results in a well-ordered calm and excellent relationships. A most impressive part of every session is the time for clearing up when children work hard and make a very useful contribution.

17. Particularly good aspects of teaching are the skilful use of questioning, the rich use of language, and the sensitivity with which staff judge the moment to teach a new skill. 'What happens when I do this?', asked a practitioner as she demonstrated a pulley mechanism. 'Would you like your paper this way, or this way, landscape or portrait?', another asked as together they fixed paper on the painting easel. Staff know the children well and what they can do; they know when to intervene and when to hold back. For example, a child engrossed in 'letter writing' made marks holding the pencil incorrectly and used either hand; his writing was at a very early stage of development. No pressure or instruction was given and it was the child who decided when 'the letter' was complete.
18. Importantly, children are given time to become absorbed in an activity and to practise a skill. Those who need to improve their concentration are skilfully motivated to persevere. They respond positively to the interest and enthusiasm of staff, and the friendly approach they receive encourages children to experiment and try new things. Trusting relationships are built, rules are applied consistently and children are treated with respect.
19. Teachers and their assistants have created an environment full of learning opportunities. Good use is made of both the garden areas as well as the inside of the building. The resources are of high quality; they are stored in such a way as to be easily accessible to children and everywhere is bright and attractive. Organisational routines are well established, even at this early stage in the year, and children are very confident and independent.
20. The children have free access to all parts of the nursery and do not stay with any one adult. Any member of staff needs to be able to take responsibility for any activity, or a group of children, at any time during the session. This is successfully accomplished through the involvement of all staff in the planning and evaluation procedures, so that all know the learning intentions of an activity and can translate them appropriately for any one child. However, this is a heavy commitment and means occasionally, from a child's point of view, that a succession of practitioners may address the same teaching points or, in the case of writing, that they are not reinforced consistently.
21. Children with special educational needs are taught well; they are enabled to make good progress towards the targets set for them. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to this progress: they are fully informed and well aware of children's individual learning needs. There are generous staffing levels so that good care is taken of individual children and they are helped towards their individual targets. Those who are at an early stage of English language acquisition are similarly well supported by a specialist assistant and other staff.

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

22. At the time of the last inspection, the relevant and appropriately organised curriculum was judged to be broad, but mathematical and creative development were tackled less consistently. The curriculum for communication, language and literacy was good. Currently, the school offers a rich learning environment with a wide range and variety of experiences. There is good breadth and balance and learning opportunities are appropriate for the differing needs of young children in the Foundation Stage. There is a reasonable balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities, although the school's philosophy is very much that children learn best through the activities that they select for themselves. The children's autonomy in their own learning and the building of their self-esteem and confidence are given a high priority and bring good results.
23. The curriculum covers all the six areas of learning recommended for the Foundation Stage of education and leads to the Early Learning Goals set for the end of the reception year in primary school. All areas of learning are well catered for, with particularly good emphasis on knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development and physical development. There are appropriate curriculum policies, for example on teaching and learning, which underpin the school's approach to everything staff do.
24. The curriculum is appropriately planned to cover each of the two daily sessions because all children attend on a part-time basis. The school has recently started to review longer-term planning and new plans for the whole of the autumn term are complete. Clear plans for personal, social and emotional development are in place for the full academic year. Weekly plans are generally comprehensive, but do not make specific reference to staff and their deployment in order to ensure they are used to best effect. Garden rotas ensure children's safety and staff take it in turns to run a storytime session. Planning involves the whole staff team; they evaluate work on a weekly basis, and plan for the week ahead. In this way all staff are well informed and understand the learning outcomes of any one of the many activities set up in the nursery.
25. The provision for children identified as having special educational needs is good, and the school is committed to equality of opportunity for all children. They are sensitively and sufficiently supported in order that they can participate in all activities. There is a good variety of useful learning opportunities that are well matched to children's ages, emotional needs and abilities.
26. The school ably harnesses children's enthusiasm for seasonal topics and areas of interest. For example, during the inspection, many activities focused on a 'garage workshop'. Good strategies for promoting basic skills in communication, language and literacy are used. These include structured group sessions for discussion and storytime. The school makes suitable use of the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals but has yet to incorporate the suggested 'stepping stones' of progress into observations and ongoing assessments.
27. A very good range of activities encompasses the local community. For instance, the children visit local shops and the nearby hospital, and during the inspection a local firm delivered a motorbike for the children to explore and investigate. There are sound links with other schools, pre-schools and playgroups in the area. Many children go on to a large number of primary schools and generally links have been established with those

schools in the immediate vicinity. The headteacher makes visits to local playgroups. Very good community links also result in many visitors to the nursery, for example, nursing staff, police officers, dental staff and those from local businesses.

28. Opportunities for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were judged as good overall at the last inspection and the school has maintained this. Topics on different traditions, faiths and beliefs are used well to promote children's understanding. They are encouraged through the positive role models of all adults in the nursery to respect and consider others' feelings and to be aware of the impact of their actions and they are taught how to negotiate. Children's personal records of achievement are used effectively to encourage them to reflect on past achievements. Many good experiences delight and fascinate the children, who readily express their awe and wonder. These occasions are often part of planned development of knowledge and understanding of the world and the study of natural materials, how things work and why things happen. For example, reflections on a sunny day during the inspection created a 'fairy garden', and wing mirrors on a motorbike enabled children to see behind themselves.
29. The children's moral development is promoted well and the staff have very high expectations for appropriate behaviour. Staff consistently follow the school's clear strategies for behaviour management, and the routines and procedures in the nursery are well developed and continuously reinforced. Relationships within the nursery are excellent and are highly effective in developing this area of learning. There is a strong emphasis within the nursery on personal development and social skills, which is effective in developing the children's ideas about what is right and wrong and how to behave.
30. Children's social development is very good and they are encouraged to be kind, helpful and understanding towards others. Relationships are good and children are all encouraged to be active participants in the activities offered. Those identified as having special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, are included in all activities.
31. Cultural development is good. For example, cookery is included to celebrate different customs and traditions from this country and abroad. Children listen to different types of musical instruments from around the world, and look at dance and traditional costumes from India and craftwork from Africa.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The good standards of pastoral care reported at the time of the last inspection have been well maintained and improved on in the intervening years. They are now very good. Appropriate and sensitive procedures for child protection are in place. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and all staff have had training, resulting in their detailed knowledge of the school's procedures and practices for this important aspect of its work.
33. Many members of the staff are trained in first aid and the school ensures that their training is fully up to date and also that more are trained each year. Fire drills take place regularly. Governors are vigilant with regard to health and safety and undertake regular risk assessments by walking round the school. All adults are expected to report any matter of concern regarding health and safety to the headteacher immediately it is identified. Governors have also ensured that security is very good so that children can work and play in a safe environment.

34. Children's absence from school is monitored and followed up if no explanation for non-attendance has been received within three days. Attendance registers are monitored regularly to check on any such absence. As already reported, the school intends to record its percentage annual attendance and absence rate in future.
35. All staff and helpers know the children very well. This results in effective monitoring of behaviour and personal development. Records of achievement support this monitoring and also provide useful information for parents and the child's primary school. Children are involved in the choice of work placed in their special file and take pride in what they have done.
36. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are fully included in all the school's activities and well supported by all the school staff.
37. Since the last inspection, the school has made considerable improvements in its assessment procedures. This is an area that is still developing but the new practices are effective in monitoring children's attainment day-to-day. Observations lead to the modification of the curriculum or a change of emphasis where necessary. A large amount of evidence is collected about any one child. However, this is not linked to the 'stepping stones' of progress and relevant information is not easy to access. Current procedures have yet to include summaries of children's progress through the year.
38. The school's care for its children and standards of personal support to them undoubtedly impact positively on the swift progress they make in the 12 months they are there.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school is warmly supported by all its parents. The pre-inspection parents' meeting and the positive returns of the parental questionnaires fully endorse this statement. Partnership is strong, mutually supportive and an undoubted strength of the school.
40. Some parents get together to organise fund-raising events with staff and these are well supported by the whole parent population. Others help in the school either in the classrooms or in the office enhancing children's learning opportunities or day-to-day administration.
41. Parents are always welcome and the school's open door policy ensures that they can talk to the headteacher or other staff whenever they like. Those who have children with special educational needs appreciate the help they are given by the school. One mother remarked that the school's warm inclusion and support had changed her life and that of her child, whose progress 'has been stunning'.
42. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is good overall. Newsletters are very well produced, attractively illustrated and informative. Reports at the end of the school year are detailed and clearly inform parents what their children know, understand and can do. Records of achievement supplement this information.
43. Many of the school's procedures and practices are endorsed and welcomed by parents. Home visits before children start at the school are especially valued and parents believe these go a long way towards helping their children settle in as quickly and as well as they do. Parents are clearly an integral part of the whole school. That this is so from day one is a credit to all concerned and ensures that they get the best out of the short time their

children attend Purley Nursery School. It also promotes and supports the most genuine and natural of partnerships.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher gives a firm steer to the direction of the school. She leads the staff team with enthusiasm and commitment, working hard and successfully to deliver good standards of learning opportunities for all children in the school. Currently, because of recruitment difficulties, she leads by example, teaching for part of every day. There have been considerable changes of staff recently and there is still no deputy headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was ably supported by one of the teaching staff acting as a deputy headteacher. Through their leadership, the day-to-day running of the nursery functions well.
45. Monitoring is satisfactory overall. The headteacher is very familiar with the work of the school through frequent informal visits to the various parts of the nursery and through working alongside staff. Governors have increased their visits to the school since the last inspection and they also receive regular reports from members of staff on particular aspects of the school's work. A comprehensive system is now needed to monitor the delivery of the planned curriculum more specifically and to plan deployment to best effect. responsibilities. Staff changes and failure to recruit a deputy headteacher have hampered progress in this matter, which was also raised at the last inspection.
46. Planning for school improvement and development is good, with appropriate staff and governor involvement. Issues to be addressed are relevant, with suitable action plans, which everyone works hard to achieve. The plan is a useful working document for all those involved with the school.
47. The governing body fulfils its duties effectively and is well organised to provide active support in shaping the future direction of the school. The governors oversee the work with children who have special educational needs very well. Arrangements for performance management have already begun. The aims of the school are realised particularly well in its work with parents, in the provision of good quality teaching and learning experiences and, above all, in its aim to enable children to be happy, confident and independent learners.
48. The bright, spacious and well cared for accommodation considerably enhances children's learning. Both indoor and outside areas provide a wealth of interest and opportunity for young children. The wide range of learning resources is in good condition and easily accessible to children.
49. The nursery is generously staffed with well-qualified teachers and nursery nurses as well as appropriately trained support assistants. The school has had to cope with considerable changes of staff recently and yet the staff team already functions well and relationships are very good. There is a need for an additional senior member of staff to help maintain an overview of the quality of the school's work and staffing arrangements. The school funds additional staff to ensure equality of provision over both morning and afternoon sessions. Additional staff are also employed to give help to children who are in the early stages of learning the English language and to those about whom the school has concerns, in advance of any formal procedures to identify special educational needs. In this way, all children are well provided for when they begin at the nursery. The school

is strongly committed to supporting and encouraging staff development and has recently achieved the Investors in People Award as a result.

50. The nursery does not have a fully delegated budget from the local education authority so that the financial resources over which it has direct control are limited. Those funds for which it is responsible are used to good effect and for the purposes for which they are intended. Best value is sought through price comparisons and all spending is linked to the school's improvement plan. The governing body oversees the school's finances effectively, is regularly informed of the plan's progress, and makes sure that the school's reserves are used wisely. All the children in the nursery are new to the school each year and all of them leave at the end of it. This results in a considerable administration workload, which is efficiently dealt with by helpful and friendly office staff who ensure the smooth running of the school day-to-day. A wise investment has been the extra help from a budget adviser who visits once a month.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. There are no main areas of weakness, but in order to build upon the many good features of the school, the following minor points should be considered for inclusion in an action plan:
- continue to refine and develop the assessment procedures, making summaries of children's progress and attainment during the year. (Paragraphs 8, 37, 60)
 - evolve a more rigorous monitoring system for teaching, in order to maintain standards and particularly, to ensure the most effective use of staff. (Paragraphs 20, 24, 45, 59).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed

23

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	12	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	52	35	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 approximately 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)

41

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

0

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

11

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

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

6

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

9

Attendance

	%
School data	*

	%
School data	*

* The school follows LEA procedures. There are no annual figures produced

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

	£
Total income	286,329
Total expenditure	260,135
Expenditure per pupil	4,564
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,642
Balance carried forward to next year	88,836

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
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

81

Number of questionnaires returned

36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25			3
My child is making good progress in school.	48	19			32
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	37			9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	11	5		58
The teaching is good.	63	26			11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	40			9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	27	4		15
The school works closely with parents.	64	28			8
The school is well led and managed.	65	29			6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	30			19
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	45			36

The inspection took place just as children were starting school. This accounts for the high percentage of 'don't knows'. Evidence from a similar questionnaire conducted at the end of the summer term showed a high level of satisfaction with the school. Parents thought their children had made good progress during their year at Purley Nursery School.

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

52. Children enter the nursery with skills that are as expected for their age. A small number of children begin school with delays in their development. The needs of all children are effectively addressed, and this means that all can be included in the exciting range of experiences on offer in the nursery. At the very beginning of the year, time is taken to establish routines and expectations of behaviour. This is important because all the children are new each year and there are no older ones to 'show the way'. By end of the first half term, the time of the inspection, children are already confident, secure and learning well. Standards have improved since the last inspection of the school and are very good.
53. Children exercise an excellent combination of initiative and personal responsibility as they move around the nursery. Their confidence is evident when selecting activities that interest them, working alone or playing with others. They concentrate well, many persisting for extended periods of time in order to complete an activity or work it through to a conclusion that satisfies them. The consistently good teaching they receive means that they make good progress and, by the time they leave the nursery, most are well on the way to attaining the goals set for children at the end of the reception year in primary school. They are surrounded by patience and encouragement and so learn to be unafraid to try new activities, and demonstrate very good levels of independence. Excellent relationships with adults are already formed and children treat each other properly. They take turns fairly and work happily together or alone. They are encouraged to befriend the pet guinea pigs in the nursery and to treat them with care and concern. Excellent levels of personal responsibility are also displayed when clearing up at the end of each session. All the children help; resources are carefully cleaned, and returned to their rightful places. Aprons are always hung up after use and other rules, such as washing hands, are always abided by.
54. Teaching and learning are good. Staff understand the steps children need to take in order to develop socially and emotionally, and sensitively support every child according to his or her needs. If a child finds it difficult to stay for the whole session, then a shorter time is arranged so the departure is a happy one; if a child's concentration is insufficient to meet the demands of story time, then help is at hand in the shape of an additional adult sitting close by. The innovative organisation of the nursery allows children free access to all that is on offer and ensures they are under the watchful eye of all staff. This enables children to mix with all the others in the nursery and all the adults, resulting in significant gains in independence, confidence and responsibility. Staff use their knowledge of individual children to match expectations for personal, social and emotional development to what each child can achieve.
55. Adults provide very good role models for children. They speak calmly and politely at all times and this influences the children. Staff have very high expectations of what children can achieve in terms of looking after themselves and their belongings, tidying up and selecting suitable activities.

Communication, language and literacy

56. Standards in communication, language and literacy are at the expected level for children of this age. They are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Almost all are already attaining at levels described by the earlier 'stepping stones' of progress and a few more confident and mature children are well on the way to attaining goals set for communication skills. They are able to express themselves and make their feelings and wishes known. Children are learning to listen and pay attention. Such attainment is similar to that found during the previous inspection; attainment was consistently satisfactory, many children were very articulate, but some were also at the early stages of language acquisition.
57. Teaching and learning are good. Staff are aware of the Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy and identify these in planning. Children develop their own ideas through imaginative play and are well supported in this work, as adults teach through participating enthusiastically in their play. Language for meaning, and self expression, is well promoted and children ask questions. Those children learning English as an additional language, together with those identified as having special educational needs, also receive the help they need. For instance, staff make good use of repetition until understanding is secure, and maintain children's full attention with good eye contact during conversations with them. Children are encouraged to listen and use their emerging skills in language to negotiate and share their ideas effectively. The staff are skilled at extending vocabulary and language and the children's learning benefits as a result.
58. There are good opportunities for children to share books; for example, books can be borrowed from the nursery on a regular basis for parents to share at home with their children. They are learning how to handle books properly, turning the pages and using the pictures to work out the story line. They are learning to recognise their own names and there is regular daily practice in this. The recognition of other simple, familiar words is reinforced effectively. For example, there are various labels around the nursery to identify objects and give information; these are also shown in a variety of languages. The children are learning to use a range of writing implements to make marks, draw and create symbols. They enjoy these activities and are aware that print carries meaning.
59. Some children can already write their own names, using the appropriate upper and lower case letters; others are still at an early stage of attempting to form letters correctly. They are developing increasing confidence in their skills; for instance, some children attempted to write letters of thanks to the motor cycle firm, for lending the nursery a motorbike. Other children can indicate the sequence of a story through their own drawings and mark making. There are many opportunities for this type of work, but at times these are missed or not reinforced consistently by all staff.
60. Resources for communication, language and literacy are very good and are generally used well to support children's learning. For example, children make good use of information and communication technology to extend their learning. They use tape recorders and the computer confidently, to listen to stories and identify simple words. There are sound procedures for assessment, and regular notes are made of children's learning. There are not enough summaries of children's progress in order to identify readily what needs to be learned next, matched against the 'stepping stones' and the Early Learning Goals.

Mathematical development

61. Standards of attainment are at an appropriate level for children of this age, as described by the 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals, and therefore satisfactory overall. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection and thus standards have been maintained. Throughout the nursery there is an emphasis on the need for mathematical language in everyday situations and activities are carefully planned to generate appropriate conversations. At times, when children help with tidying up, they use good skills of sorting and matching and ordering as they park tricycles in numbered parking places and place equipment in numbered trays and storage crates. Most children are able to use words to describe size and position, and a few count up to five correctly and recognise the numbers. Children are introduced to number songs and rhymes to consolidate their early experiences.
62. Teaching and learning in this area are sound. The nursery's successful approach is predominantly to provide children with a rich variety of opportunities to use mathematical skills and to understand the need for them. For example, the 'garage workshop' provides many opportunities to measure, match and compare, and dials and charts help to complete a 'real life' situation; bulb planting enables a teacher to introduce children to early counting (bulbs) and matching (holes) with the children. Sand timers are used all around the nursery to define the length of time a child is able to stay at an activity if others are wanting a turn. In this way, children absorb and understand the need for mathematics, enjoy it, and are well prepared for the more formal aspects of this area of learning later on. All staff in the nursery help to supervise activities which promote mathematical understanding, and they engage in conversation that will help development in this area. Questioning skills are used to good effect as staff intervene in children's play, for example asking, 'How many are there?' and 'What is the number on this bike?'. This helps to establish mathematical ideas. Children's thinking is developed as they learn to work together. The comment, 'I'll put my shoes under four, because I'm four', led to others placing their shoes under numbers displayed along the wall.
63. At the time of the last inspection, opportunities for mathematics were limited. Now children enjoy the rich environment of the nursery and mathematical possibilities are included everywhere. There is no member of staff particularly assigned to oversee this area of development but it is promoted well and an appropriate number of specific learning intentions are listed in weekly plans.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Overall, standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are at an appropriate level for children of this age but many children are making swift progress and are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in specific aspects of this area by the end of the Foundation Stage. Their skills in using technology are very well developed for their age. Some children are already attaining some of the later 'stepping stones' of progress towards the Early Learning Goals. This is an improvement on the standards found at the time of the last inspection. Since then, this area of learning has been promoted well. The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world is good overall, with some very good aspects such as the use of information and communication technology.

65. Teaching and learning across the breadth of this area is good. Staff are enthusiastic and this benefits children's learning. The staff are secure in their subject knowledge and use the very good resources effectively to promote learning through a wide range of activities. As a consequence, children learn to be observant and to notice similarities and differences in a wide range of materials, both natural and manufactured. There are good opportunities to study nature, particularly in the outdoor areas, which are used very well to enable children to explore. They look at leaves, cones, sunflower heads and pumpkins; they plant bulbs and consider the effects of sunlight reflecting on shiny materials and metallic objects. Children become increasingly aware of life cycles and have good experiences in observing various stages of development first hand, such as changes in tadpoles, caterpillars and ducklings.
66. All children are developing their skills effectively when selecting tools and techniques to create models, another aspect of this area of development. They have good access to a wide range of media to create their own three-dimensional designs. There is a very good range of expertise among staff, which is shared with the children. Others from the community share their interests with the children, for example in music, and those from different cultures come to share their knowledge and experience. Children are encouraged effectively to think back to past experiences; they successfully recollect their trips, visits and accomplishments. The locality is used very well to develop the children's understanding of where they live and of a range of cultures, beliefs and backgrounds. Children make good progress because they develop a curiosity about their world and are increasingly observant. The access provided to materials and equipment enables the children to extend their investigative skills, experiment and explore.
67. The range of resources is very good; they are of good quality and used effectively. The nursery is particularly well equipped in this area of learning and staff use recycled resources and materials well. There is a very good variety of technological equipment in the nursery, which the children use very well in their learning. For example, they are confident in using the computer, and tape recorder, and there are good opportunities for them to use a digital camera and microscope. The organisation of the nursery means the children are able to explore their immediate environment and they are becoming adept at finding their way around the indoor and outdoor space. Other opportunities are provided for them to explore the local area, for instance a recent trip to a motorbike shop, and at other times of the year they visit the local hospital and shops. Visitors come into the nursery regularly and share their experiences and skills.

Physical development

68. Standards of physical development are at the expected level for children of this age as they begin their year in the nursery. They are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage and some are already well on the way to achieving the goals intended for the end of the reception year in primary school. For many, development in certain aspects of the area is already at levels equivalent to the later 'stepping stones' of progress. This represents very good progress. Children can thread beads, jump and land appropriately and experiment with different ways of moving. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
69. Teaching is good and the staff encourage the children to move confidently, while reminding them be aware of their own and others' safety. Children are developing good skills in movement. As a result of good teaching, and the very high expectations set by staff, the children's confidence in their abilities is progressing well. They use the variety

of wheeled toys effectively in their play and are learning to push, pull and propel themselves along, negotiating space, obstacles and other children as they go. There is a good variety of climbing equipment, which the children use well to climb, balance and jump.

70. The children are also encouraged effectively to consider healthy options and are reminded to pay good attention to hygiene, for example washing their hands after handling pets. There is a very good range of implements, toys and equipment to develop dexterity. A wide variety of pencils, brushes, and tools for modelling and creating designs is readily available. Information and communication technology equipment provides popular activities and children are developing good keyboard and mouse skills as they follow the programs. They are given good encouragement to use scissors and other tools properly.
71. Resources for physical development are of good quality and well maintained. There are two sizes of climbing frame, so less confident and agile children are catered for. Two outdoor areas, and the very good indoor space, give children opportunities to explore space and develop their co-ordination. Toys and equipment are used well to encourage children to learn. Children identified as having special educational needs are very well supported in physical pursuits so that everything is available to them. Staff make regular notes of individual children's development in physical pursuits.

Creative development

72. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection and are at an appropriate level for children of this age. During the intervening years, good improvements have been made in the range of activities on offer. At that time, specific aspects of music, dance and imaginative play were given insufficient attention, and thus children's progress was limited. This has now been addressed. Children make good progress and are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals set for the end of the reception year.
73. Children now utilise fully a very good range of role-play areas, opportunities for art and design, and many others where they respond using all their senses. Staff have created a special sensory area which provides very good opportunities for children to respond in a variety of ways to what they see and feel. They are quickly encouraged to learn and sing songs; they enjoy mixing colours and investigate shapes and textures. Very good opportunities are afforded to work alongside artists and musicians, which helps children to discover and explore. They make good progress. After a short time in the nursery, children accurately discuss colours in their paintings, textures of dough and salt, and movement of leaves from the trees which they are able to replicate, inspired by music selected by an adult. They become shopkeepers, garage mechanics, homemakers and office workers; they are adept at imaginative role-play, largely due to the way in which adults join in, developing and extending their ideas.
74. Teaching and learning opportunities for all children, whatever their particular needs, are of good quality. Staff are sensitive to their needs, and to children's accomplishments, and children know their efforts to make something new or express an idea will be sympathetically received and valued. Most particularly, children are given sufficient time to explore and develop ideas. Although children are encouraged to move from one activity to another, staff are also sensitive to the fact that they need support to concentrate on an idea and work through to a conclusion. As a result of good teaching and support, children throughout the nursery work with confidence. They know that

adults will provide help if needed and encourage them to be adventurous. As soon as children are thought to be sufficiently confident, they take part in separate dance and music sessions.

75. Children have access to good quality materials and many examples of beautiful things that occur naturally or have been made in different parts of the world. Staff work well together, share ideas and resources, and provide an environment that is rich in opportunity to pursue new ideas.