

INSPECTION REPORT

PEARTREE WAY NURSERY SCHOOL

Stevenage

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117080

Headteacher: Sue West

Reporting inspector: John Lilly
12487

Dates of inspection: 25 – 27 February 2002

Inspection number: 230535

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:	Peartree Way Stevenage Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Bridie Speller
Date of previous inspection:	11 May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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			English as an additional language	Teaching Leadership and management
			Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school was originally built as a community project and continues to play a highly important role within its community. Parents and others say how much it is valued. The school holds two equivalent sessions in the mornings and afternoons, and approximately 45 children attend each session. Most children have attended one of the two local pre-school playgroups and join the nursery school shortly after their third birthday. Most go on to a nearby infant school just before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were no children about to go to the infant school, and two-thirds of the children were only three. The school serves a stable community but one that faces considerably greater social and economic problems than in most areas of the country. A higher than average number of children have special educational needs, and some of these children have great problems with their learning. An above-average proportion of children, come from minority ethnic backgrounds, although most are fluent English speakers. At the time of the inspection only one child was learning English as a new language. Most children join the school with lower than average attainment and often lack confidence and independence. The school has earned several quality awards including the Hertfordshire Quality Award for early years education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Peartree Way Nursery is an excellent school. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for a team of very committed and effective teachers and support staff. The team and the governors have a strong vision of what the best education for young children should be. They achieve much of that vision because they plan and manage their work in detail and very expertly. They are never complacent but always trying to improve. The team provides an excellent curriculum that is broad and rich in exciting learning opportunities. Children enter the school with below average attainment and make very good progress. Most will have almost met their goals for this stage in their education by the time they move on to reception classes. There is a very happy, purposeful and inclusive ethos to the school, backed by very close partnership with parents and the community. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is excellently led and very well managed.
- Teaching is very good and children of all abilities and backgrounds make very good progress.
- The curriculum provides excellent opportunities to learn.
- Provision for personal development is very good.
- There is a very good partnership with parents and the community.
- There are excellent links with partner schools
- The school manages its finances very well and gains very good value.

What could be improved

There are no areas in need of significant improvement. Governors and staff are not complacent because they are aware of areas where they can do even better. Areas for governors to consider for even further improvement are:

- Staff development
- Governors' monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school.
- Opportunities for children to reflect quietly
- Opportunities for children to consider the past, present and future.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1998. The last inspection found Peartree to be a good school with many very good features, but judged planning for teaching and monitoring of teaching as in need of some improvement. The school rectified these weaknesses with determination and both are now strong areas. Attainment and progress, overall, have improved since the last inspection and continue to improve. The school is now strong in all the main areas that make up a very effective school. Children's learning is more rapid, more rich in variety and most of the children will reach the expected levels of attainment by the time they are five. Improvement has been very good.

STANDARDS

Most children join the school aged three years with below average levels of attainment, and find it difficult to organise their work and relate to others. They gain confidence very quickly and soon learn the routines of life and work in school. Children of all backgrounds and abilities make at least good and usually very good progress, working hard with their teachers. They move rapidly through the steps in their learning and, by the time they go on to reception classes aged four, most will have reached the level of attainment expected at that age. By the time they are five, the large majority of children are likely to reach the standard expected at that age in all the areas of learning and a significant minority will exceed it. Many of the children with special educational needs will achieve the early learning goals and those who do not will have made good progress. All children make excellent progress in their personal and social skills, and very good progress in their communication, creative and physical skills, and at least good progress in their mathematical understanding and their knowledge and understanding of the world. This very good picture is achieved because the teachers set challenging targets for each child, and have a clear idea of what all children can achieve by the time they leave. This is a key reason why standards have improved significantly.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very positive attitudes and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Almost all children behave well in and out of lessons. They know what is expected of them and behave accordingly.
Personal development and relationships	The school breeds confidence in the children, encouraging them to exercise responsibility and develop meaningful relationships. There is mutual respect between adults and children.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are very good. No children are absent without good reason.

The school is very successful at helping children who find it very difficult to relate to others because of their special educational needs. Several of the parents of these children commented on their children's very good progress, and the way other children went out of their way to be friendly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

Most teaching is very good or excellent, and almost all is at least good. There is no teaching that is in any way close to unsatisfactory. Teaching is extremely well planned and organised, with clear objectives and providing many ways to learn. Particularly strong features of teaching are the high and firm expectations and excellent relationships. Consequently, children of all abilities and backgrounds learn rapidly and develop secure social and personal skills. Teachers and staff know the children very well and they generate an atmosphere of fun and love of learning in which pupils can develop into mature, confident and well-rounded individuals who feel valued. High expectations of behaviour and a particular focus on pupils' personal development produce very good results. At the heart of all the learning is language and number work. Children learn how important these areas are and strive to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is excellent, providing rich and varied ways to learn. It is very well managed, with an excellent balance between group work and purposeful play.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good and very expert. Staff identify every need and plan skilfully to overcome any problem.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for children learning English as a new language is good. The one child currently learning English is actively encouraged and is making good progress, both in learning English and in general work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for the personal development of the children. Provision for spiritual and for cultural development is very good. It is excellent for moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the children very well in every respect. The school is extremely good at ensuring that no child feels threatened.

Parents value the school highly, and many help in school. They listen to their children read at home and ensure that their children arrive on time and keen to learn. There is a very strong sense of equal partnership between home and school. The curriculum not only meets requirements for children of this age, but also enriches and extends their learning. Assessment is a considerable strength because it is used very skilfully to identify the needs of each child and the ways to help them overcome any problems. The staff work very well together to provide supportive and consistent care. Of particular benefit to children is the effort put in to liaison with the local playgroups and infant school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she encourages others to share in decision-making. Consequently, the school is very effectively and expertly managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities and are rapidly increasing their skills in improving the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a very reflective school that evaluates its performance rigorously. It supports this by testing its performance against quality standards and challenging targets for each child.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources very well

There are enough qualified and experienced staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The basic accommodation is satisfactory and has been developed extremely well, providing a very good place to learn. The resources for learning are a strength of the school; they are of high quality and excellent range. The school works hard to gain best value from its resources by looking for better ways to provide for the children through asking others for advice and comparing itself with quality elsewhere.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a few parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy at school • Their children are well taught and make good progress • They appreciate the warm and productive partnership between home and school • The school is well led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to share with parents at home

Inspectors agree with all the positive views of parents. Children take much work home to share with parents, but, perhaps, even more could be done to help parents to help their children, for example, with reading.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children join the school with below average development and make immediate and rapid progress. Children of all abilities, stages of development and background make at least good steady progress overall, and usually very good progress. As reported by the infant school to which most children transfer, this gives them a flying start when they enter the reception class. By the time they leave the nursery most will be close to achieving their learning goals and on target to achieve them by the end of the Foundation Stage. Many are likely to exceed these goals, and so begin the National Curriculum very well prepared as keen and able learners. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and promise to go on improving. The staff set challenging targets for each child to achieve, acting rapidly if their progress slows and always looking for ways to help children achieve even higher standards.
2. Children make excellent progress in their personal development, and this underpins all their other learning. They make very good progress with speaking, listening, reading and writing, balancing confidence with acquired skills. They make good progress with their number work, and enjoy and understand numbers. These essential skills help them expand their knowledge and understanding of the world well. Their very good progress in creative work allows them to enrich their imagination and develop their confidence to work creatively. They make very good progress in their physical development, not simply in the playground activities especially popular with the boys, but also in the finer movements when using their fingers to control, for example, a pencil or construct a model.
3. A strength of the school is the way staff help all children very precisely to find ways to succeed. This is because teachers continuously and regularly assess progress, identifying the exact strategy that will move each child forward. This may involve children at different stages of development or with special educational needs, but also involves recognising the very able children. A specialist nursery nurse has responsibility for running additional sessions that very effectively extend the provision for all these children. A core value of the school is that there is always a way to help a child succeed, and this is one reason why governors wish to extend the provision of the school beyond the present times of the sessions, by starting earlier and ending later.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

4. Children very much look forward to coming to school. They are happy and most are eager to talk to visitors. On arrival they are keen to start and even the youngest children are already very aware of the routines; they excitedly change their shoes because they are eager to join their groups. The majority of children behave very well and show very good attitudes to their learning. In lessons most of the children are enthusiastic learners who listen and respond well and are keen to participate. In a free-play session one child was playing a number recognition game with a teacher and three others quickly arrived because they wanted to join in the fun. Most children settle to work quickly and concentrate well on their individual or group tasks, often without direct supervision. Many have already learnt the importance of sharing and they co-operate well in group work and collaborate, focusing on their tasks. A good example was when, following discussion, children put seats into a coach they had constructed. A few children with challenging behaviour, mostly boys, can become restless and boisterous but their

impact is minimal because teachers positively reinforce the school's high expectations of acceptable behaviour. Parents commented that the staff are very good at helping children to understand the consequences of their actions and to develop awareness of others' feelings. Even after a short time at nursery their children are much calmer and more responsive. They have become eager to learn and ask a lot more questions.

5. Children enjoy responsibility and independence. They try hard to do things for themselves and only ask for help when necessary. They fetch their own coats and change shoes when going out to play, and help each other to dress and put on aprons. Most have already learnt to put things away when they have finished with them before getting something else out.
6. Children who stay for lunch behave very well. They line up in a very orderly fashion and clearly enjoy the experience of being entertained by their singing dinner lady. They also readily help to clear up afterwards. Most play happily together in the playground and respect each other's space. The children show a healthy respect for their environment and look after the resources well.
7. Staff have a very good rapport with children, who respond well and with respect. Teachers create an atmosphere of fun and their enthusiasm influences the children's attitudes. Most of the children get on very well with each other and enjoy each other's company, some having already formed friendships. This was evident when children arrived at school and quickly sought out their special friends in the group, chatting away merrily.
8. Attendance is very good for a nursery. Children want to come to school and parents likewise are eager that their children attend. Parents always give a reason if children are absent. Children arrive punctually, eager to start. The staff call registers properly and know exactly who is there. They are quickly alerted to any absences and investigate why a child is absent.
9. The school has maintained the high standards of attitudes, behaviour and attendance since the last inspection. All make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. Teaching is very good. Children are taught in four groups during each session and each of the two teachers and two nursery nurses take individual responsibility for one of these groups. They work very well as a team, planning together so that all the children have the same opportunities over time. This grouping aids the children's learning because they feel they belong to 'their' group, and the teachers know the children in their groups very well. The quality of teaching has improved, since the last inspection.

11. Most of the teaching is very good or excellent. The teaching is very good because:

- The teaching team plan together and in detail. They ensure that every child covers the same topics and has the same opportunities;
- They share good ideas and also any problems that arise. This helps them learn continuously better ways of teaching;
- All teachers have a very good understanding of the skills and knowledge the children need to gain and build these carefully into their planning;
- Every session and activity has clear and well-selected objectives;
- Teachers assess the progress of each child continuously and, at set times, as a team. This helps them set targets for each child, and ensure that the work is challenging yet possible;
- They use and arrange resources extremely well, ensuring that children move productively from group activities into more free-choice and independent learning;
- They keep an eye on each child and respond immediately if their learning slows;
- They use language extremely well, helping children to understand clear speech;
- They ask questions in ways that encourage children to listen and think for themselves;
- They are extremely well organised and work closely with learning support assistants and volunteers. Consequently, children move smoothly between activities and no time is wasted;
- They manage the learning and behaviour extremely well.

Teaching is rarely less effective, and when it is, it is because individual children present behaviour problems that distract the teacher's attention from the other children.

12. The very effective teaching helps children to learn quickly and securely and to reach their potential. Children quickly realise that learning is fun but needs concentration and hard work. They learn rapidly that they need to work in an organised way and to care about others. In groups they listen and concentrate and, working on their own, they stick at a task and try to do their best. They choose sensible things to do and naturally select a variety of tasks, seldom flitting from activity to activity. When they choose to work with others, for example, in the 'garage' or constructing a make-believe bus, they co-operate together and collaborate in role-playing or imagining a story. They take great care with their work, thinking carefully about the best way to achieve their goal, for example, when cooking cakes or wrapping a parcel for 'Mummy'.

13. Teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy are very good. Children listen carefully and this helps them learn to speak as clearly as their teachers. They follow the example of their teachers and love books and the enjoyment they can bring. They realise that writing is useful and needs to be done carefully. Similarly, they learn the importance and usefulness of counting and numbers, finding the work fun even when they need to think very hard.

14. Girls and boys do equally well. A feature of the effective teaching is that children of different abilities, including those who have great difficulties with behaviour and relating to others, are helped very precisely to overcome these problems. The child learning English has words carefully explained and sometimes 'acted out.' A great strength of the teaching is that teachers identify very able children and help them to forge ahead.

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

15. The curriculum is broad, balanced and carefully planned to cover all the required areas of learning. The yearly teaching programme is sensibly structured as units of study, which are expertly divided into specific learning objectives linked to each area of the curriculum. The creative way in which activities are offered ensures that children have a rich and worthwhile range of experiences to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers work very hard to build children's self-esteem and to nurture their independence. Children feel confident to explore and solve problems together and teachers are excellent at knowing when to intervene and when to allow the children to think through a task together. The curriculum has become more varied and rich since the last inspection.
16. The learning environment, both inside school and outdoors, is very well planned. Careful management of resources allows a rotation of basic equipment as well as that used to support specific units of study; consequently, resources are used very effectively to support learning and to enthuse the children. Adults are very good at using opportunities throughout the day to develop children's language and to consolidate or extend their thinking. Children with special educational needs are very well supported as they experience the various areas of the curriculum, and expertly planned extension activities challenge the more able children. Visits and visitors further enhance the curriculum, for example, visitors supervise a cookery activity or share their musical instruments with the children. The nearby church hall is used very effectively as a base for the children to experience physical development activities linked to the curriculum.
17. The provision for children's spiritual development is good. The children enjoy a warm and welcoming environment where they feel happy and safe, and begin to understand that life has meaning and purpose. Even at this early stage in their education, as children arrive at nursery, the vast majority are quick to settle and say goodbye to their carers; in this way, children realise that they have individual significance and importance. The children celebrate a wide range of major festivals such as the Chinese New Year, Divali and Christmas and enjoy practical activities such as baking pancakes when thinking about Shrove Tuesday. Celebration time, when all the children are together, provides a good opportunity for them to share their successes and reflect on their experiences. These occasions, however, are not held on a regular basis and the demands of the curriculum sometimes mean that there is insufficient opportunity for the children to have a period of quiet reflection when, perhaps, they could experience a sense of awe and wonder in what they are seeing and doing. Insufficient emphasis is also placed on the passing of time in terms of the changing of the seasons and the different phases of the day. These elements, if included in the everyday routine of the nursery, would provide further valuable opportunities for the children to develop their spiritual awareness, building on the way they find joy in nature in the very imaginatively planned outside 'wild area'.
18. Provision for children's moral development is excellent. Strong but sensitive emphasis is placed on teaching the children to develop a sense of right and wrong and time is taken to explain why someone might be feeling hurt or upset. Very good routines and appropriate intervention from adults encourage children to behave well and to think about others. With very few exceptions, children respond extremely well to teachers' high expectations in terms of behaviour.
19. Provision for children's social development is excellent. When children first start at the nursery, staff take enough time to develop trust and to build a secure relationship between an adult and the child. Staff encourage parents to come into the nursery at the start and end of sessions and this time is used exceptionally well as an opportunity to involve both parents and child in a social occasion. Adults treat children with respect,

addressing them in a caring, supportive manner and helping children to resolve disputes when they occur. Children learn to care for their own and other people's property, for instance, when tidying up following an activity and when returning a 'lost' item to its owner. Children care for each other and are sensitive towards those who have specific special needs. The school sometimes gathers as a school to celebrate achievements, and also to put on a show for parents in the church hall.

20. Provision for cultural development is very good. Resources are carefully selected to give the children a range of cultural experiences as they work in the different areas of the nursery. Children's awareness of their own and other cultures is nurtured through dance, music, the range of dressing-up clothes and visual displays. For instance, a superb Chinese dragon was produced by the children when thinking about the Chinese New Year and was used effectively as a stimulus for dance. The school takes considerable care to see that all resources encourage children to appreciate the richness and diversity of faiths, races and cultures present in British and world societies. The very good partnership with parents helps children appreciate their achievements within their own families. A very good example is the day set aside for grandparents to visit the school.
21. The nursery plays an important part in community family initiatives such as the 'Help your child' sessions covering mathematics, reading and writing. This initiative aims to address the needs of some parents who want their child's experience of school to be better than their own. Staff also provide a crèche for the 'Chatterbox' sessions held at the community centre where parents help other parents, and also run a summer play-scheme, which relies on parental support. The local community has been well established for many years, and later generations of former pupils now attend the nursery. Staff at the nursery take their role as part of this community very seriously and have close links with several other local bodies for example, the church where the school uses the spacious hall for physical education; this is of great benefit to the children. The school uses the community a great deal to help children learn about people such as firemen and postmen, and visit such places as farms further afield. Many other links such as the police, library, schools and senior citizens' groups all enhance the curriculum by stimulating the children's awareness of the world around them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

22. The children receive very good care and guidance. Teachers and staff know the children very well and, through their strong team spirit, they work hard to create an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment of learning. The nursery fosters independence and self-confidence in children so that they can develop into mature, confident and well-rounded individuals who feel valued.
23. Child protection procedures follow the local authority guidelines and there is good communication among staff on these issues. The recent amalgamation of the local authority's children's services into the Children's, Schools and Family Service has enhanced the level and quality of communication between the school and the various professionals involved. Children who become ill while at school are well cared for and most staff have first-aid training. This is supported by close liaison with health professionals when necessary, and the school has particularly strong links with the local health visitor. Supervision at lunchtimes is very good and the supervisor is clearly a favourite with the children.

24. Monitoring of behaviour is excellent. The high expectations produce very good results. The behaviour policy gives a clear understanding of these expectations, emphasising the importance of the positive approach. The school ethos fosters a love of learning and an enthusiasm to learn in a safe and happy community where all respect and value each other. Staff are quick to spot any disagreements and deal with these incidents firmly and fairly so eliminating any oppressive behaviour. Parents value the care taken by staff to encourage good social skills. Children will remind each other how to behave, for instance, in one small group a slightly older child said to a younger one 'When you want to join in you mustn't push but ask nicely'.
25. Staff monitor attendance rigorously and follow up absences quickly. They make parents and children aware that the school places a high priority on good attendance. The school brochure reinforces the message, as does the headteacher's introductory talk to parents. Her message is 'start as you mean to go on'. The school encourages good attendance because it is an exciting and stimulating place where learning is fun.
26. The school's ethos emphasises the children's personal development. The staff work hard to raise children's confidence, independence and awareness of themselves so that they will attempt new experiences without fear of failure. Teachers allow children to make mistakes in a safe environment as part of their learning. The personal, social and emotional development policy has clear aims and was drawn up to reflect the national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff recognise that building confidence is grounded in a secure start in school and they have a very flexible approach so that they meet the needs of each child. They believe it is vital that children feel secure and happy, and encourage parents to stay until their children are happy to be left on their own. The school's excellent links with the local playgroups contribute significantly to the children quickly settling in as they have opportunities to visit the nursery, and staff visit the playgroups so that the children quickly remember familiar faces. There is very good communication between the two pre-school groups and the nursery on children's special educational needs so that nursery staff are well prepared in advance. Likewise, the children's move on to the infant stage is very smooth and children are very well prepared. When an inspector visited the local infant school, teachers were very appreciative of the high quality liaison between the nursery and school and the very positive effects this has on the children. When talking to children who had recently left the nursery, the inspector saw that they had been extremely well prepared and were more than ready to move on. They confidently talked with great expressiveness and enthusiasm about their recent 'book day' when they dressed up as characters from their favourite stories. They remembered their time at the nursery with great fondness but, as is the way with young children, they thought it was 'ages ago', even though it was just a few weeks before. They felt very much part of their new school as 'big children now'. Both the playgroups and also the infant school recognised the hard work, particularly by the headteacher of the nursery, in fostering an ethos of help and co-operation and sharing of information for the benefit of the children.
27. Health and safety provision is very good. Safety of the children in their care is a very high priority and all staff are very aware of the whereabouts of the children in their group. Procedures follow the local authority guidelines and the school proactively monitors possible risks through regular site surveys. No areas of concern were noted during the inspection.
28. The staff rightly consider the school's role within the community as part of their care for the children. In exceptional circumstances, a few children enter the nursery early and others stay for both sessions if this is needed. The school also provides lunch for children who need this provision; this is not only a very good example of the care the

school offers, but also makes a major contribution to the children's social development. The school has continued to maintain its high standards of pupil care since the last inspection and has further improved the promotion of pupils' personal development. It has greatly improved the quality of liaison with its sister institutions, with considerable benefits to the children's learning and personal development.

29. Staff know their children very well and are constantly assessing what they know, understand and can do. They are expert in knowing when to allow time for a child to consolidate an idea and when to give them an opportunity to extend their thinking. The careful structuring of the groups and the fact that a child stays in the same teacher's group throughout their stay at the nursery, allow a very strong relationship and understanding to develop between child and teacher. Teachers use this knowledge extremely effectively when assessing the progress made by children and when setting targets.
30. Planning is very thorough and is reviewed every week by each teacher and assistant together. If necessary, amendments to the following week's plan are made as a result of this discussion. This careful attention to planning and the thorough procedure for reviewing the appropriateness of activities are highly successful in ensuring that all children receive an appropriate and stimulating curriculum.
31. When they first join the nursery, each child's ability is carefully assessed using the authority's 'baseline assessment' system. This information is used very effectively as the basis of planning and is reviewed formally each term to assess how much progress each child has made. This information is quite properly shared with parents and the next step targets are agreed. In this way, parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and in enhancing their children's progress.
32. The very good teamwork among the staff enables constant discussion about children's progress to take place and these informal discussions, coupled with the more formal occasions when children's achievements are discussed and recorded, provide a very thorough and effective assessment process within the nursery. Each half term, each child's progress is carefully recorded, and examples of their work and photographs of their achievements are sensibly used as evidence to support these judgements. Together this information forms a very comprehensive portfolio for each child that staff use effectively, both while the child is in the nursery and also when they move on to infant school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. There is a very strong sense of partnership between the school and parents, and the school's aims acknowledge the importance of parents' role as co-educators. Parents' responses both in the pre-inspection meeting and also to the questionnaire were highly positive with almost 100 per cent agreement on every issue. All said their children like school and that staff work closely with parents for the children's benefit. In the meeting, parents particularly praised the boundless energy of the staff and the extra effort and commitment they give to ensure that their children get the best possible start to their education. Some parents could not speak highly enough of the staff, particularly the headteacher. Others were nearly moved to tears in their appreciation of the extra care taken to include their children with special educational needs, for example, allowing them to take pride of place at the front of the stage for the Christmas play. They praised the many positive changes in attitude of a number of children very soon after starting. Parents appreciate the school's flexibility when responding to individual needs and that, as put into words by one parent, 'The staff are here because they love children not because it is a job'. Inspectors agree with these positive views of parents. A few parents wanted improvements in work to be shared with their children at home; the school is sensibly planning to give further advice as to how parents can support their children's reading.
34. The school's links with parents are very good. Parents value the open-door policy and the opportunities to meet their children's teachers before and after school each day; many do so. The headteacher and staff are very approachable and parents find this daily support very reassuring. Parents receive good quality information through the school brochure, the annual governors' report, regular newsletters and information booklets. Parents are informed of their child's targets for the term and asked for their comments, and at the end of their nursery career children are given very detailed and informative records of achievement with examples of their work and photographs of various activities. Parents have opportunities to discuss their children's progress during the year and to share the record of achievement before their children leave. Parents' consultation sessions are very well attended. New parents are invited to a 'Get to know your nursery' day, which is intended to make them feel very welcome and very much a part of the nursery from day one. Grandparents' Day and Fun Days also encourage participation by members of the wider family. Photographic evidence showed grandparents happily joining in activities such as hand-painting and printing, and creating large paintings outdoors.
35. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very positive. Several parents help regularly; all parents are encouraged to sign a rota for help with cookery sessions and nearly all of them do. Others volunteer to help with special projects, for example, in art and information and communication technology; there are always more volunteers than required to accompany trips and visits. Parents are invited to borrow books, tapes and toys to share with their children at home, and many 'mums and dads' spent time choosing books during the inspection. All parents are automatically members of the Friends' Association and help to raise funds and organise social events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for staff and children. She gives everyone a sense of drive, direction, individual importance and a belief that anything is possible. She founds her leadership upon very strong values and a very clear idea of the type of education young children need. She leads by example through excellent teaching, very good relationships with parents and strong representation of the school among the wider community. Her highest skill is the way she encourages others to share the leadership, for example, enabling the senior teacher to build her many strengths, sharing decisions with the team, helping governors to play a more central role, and, above all, convincing parents that they play an essential part in their children's education.
37. As one result, the governors are playing a much more effective role in leading the school forward, not satisfied with simple support, but finding out what is done and how the school can improve further. They do this in a businesslike manner, and are ensuring that they get the training to fulfil their responsibilities well.
38. The staff work as a close knit-team, spinning ideas off each other, and finding solutions together. All plan and manage their various and individual responsibilities well, but they also ensure that they plan and assess coherently as a team, creating a plan that they all move forward together.
39. The school development plan is a well-considered action plan, with carefully thought-through strategies for the future. It is closely related to careful and prudent financial planning and to essential training for staff. In some areas, the plan does not tightly specify the quality to be achieved or schedule actions over time, but in discussion these are known and well understood. This is largely because the school is building upon what staff have learned from work towards two quality standards for early years education. These frameworks mean that monitoring and evaluation are continuous and precise, and identify quickly what needs to improve or change. These standards would form a good basis for governors who are seeking ways of making their monitoring and evaluation of the school more precise and helpful. Governors could usefully consider comparing the school's provision with that of other excellent nurseries or 'beacon' schools.
40. This is an intelligent school in which staff reflect upon and evaluate their work, explain what this tells them clearly, and talk through and decide ways forward. They do so as a team, sure of the direction this discussion implies and striving to fulfil strong aims and embedded values.
41. All these strengths come together in the planning and management of the curriculum and the teaching. Consequently, the daily work of the school moves forward like a well-run ship, sailing towards its destination and able to ride out the storms and the waves. As one result, quality is consistently good across all groups and activities. This produces high quality learning. The leadership and management are even stronger than at the last inspection.

Accommodation

42. The buildings are old and the site cramped. One does not notice this because every space is put to good use, for example, the development of an excellent play area and exciting wildlife area outside, and the use of every space for group and individual learning inside. Displays provide a stimulating and curiosity-engaging place to learn. Every space is used, for example, the dining room for cooking, and the community room for small group work for children needing either help or more challenging work for the most able. Even the school office comes into use when children work with the school secretary. Overall, the accommodation provides a safe, healthy and exciting place in which to learn.

Resources for learning

43. Resources for learning are very good. They are of very good quality and excellent range. They are a major contributor to the effective teaching because they are well chosen, well cared for and stored, and easily available to teachers and children alike. Books and equipment are carefully audited so that they present a very good picture of the variety of races and cultures present in British and world societies, and do not present inappropriate gender stereotypes.

Staffing

44. There are enough well-trained and experienced staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum and the wide range of children's needs. The school secretary is well qualified and skilled. Lunchtime supervisors are well trained and experienced, and the caretaker takes good care that the buildings are clean and safe. Staff training is well focused and increases skills and knowledge, and the school is carefully introducing performance management for teachers. The headteacher works perceptively and thoughtfully to develop the skills of all staff, and is skilled at recruiting the staff the school needs. She has delegated further development to the senior teacher, who has very good ideas as to how staff development can become more systematic and even more effective. She bases her planning on what has been learned from previous work towards quality standards, and intends to commit to work towards the Investor in People standard.

Efficiency

45. Governors and staff manage their finance and resources very well. They link their investments very closely to the school development plan, and ask themselves the question, 'What cannot we buy if we spend money on that?'. Once decided, expenditure is very carefully checked and monitored. The school secretary administers the accounts very efficiently, and the school makes good use of information technology. Grants for special purposes are spent appropriately. The school consults others, compares its work with others by using accredited quality standards, seeks best value at lowest price and challenges staff to seek new and better ways of improving their work. Considering the excellent provision and the very good progress of the children alongside the average income per child, the school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. This is an excellent and highly effective school and there are no significant weaknesses. Even so, governors and staff should consider the following when striving to do even better and to maintain the high quality already achieved. They can achieve this by:
- (1) Planning and managing continuous staff development on the lines already thought-through. This will build on the school's previous work on quality standards.
(Paragraph 44)
 - (2) Increasing the governors' use of the local education authority's quality framework when evaluating standards in the school.
(Paragraph 39)
 - (3) Looking for further ways to compare their performance with that of other schools, perhaps by visiting 'beacon' schools.
(Paragraph 39)
 - (4) Increasing opportunities for children to have quiet times for reflection in support of their spiritual development.
(Paragraph 17)
 - (5) Considering further ways for extending the children's understanding of past, present and future.
(Paragraph 74)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	14	8	2	0	0	0
Percentage	14	50	29	7	0	0	0

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

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)	45
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

Special educational needs

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	41

English as an additional language

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance: the children are not of statutory school age

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.5
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10 per session

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 – 2001
	£
Total income	174921
Total expenditure	172502
Expenditure per pupil	2241
Balance brought forward from previous year	30183
Balance carried forward to next year	32602

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	90
Number of questionnaires returned	15

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	29	0	0	14
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	29	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	28	9	0	27
The teaching is good.	71	14	0	0	14
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	20	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	38	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	14	0	0	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	31	7	0	8

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents went out of their way to tell inspectors not only how much they valued the school but also why. Above all they valued the commitment of staff.

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

47. Children work towards 'early learning goals' in six areas of learning. Within each area, for example, mathematics and numeracy, they are expected to move through a series of 'steps'. Children who reach the end of the Foundation Stage have a secure basis for work within the National Curriculum. What follows shows considerable improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. Provision for learning is excellent. Most children enter the nursery with low social skills and leave the nursery having exceeded the learning goals. Their development is excellent.
49. The teaching is excellent and at the heart of the school's success. Adults manage the children with firm love and high expectations. They state what is expected, but help very perceptively when children find it difficult. They always explain why things should be and how this helps the children succeed. This is a great strength because some children have serious and special educational needs, and others easily become anxious when first arriving at school. The strength of the teaching is the way every adult builds this input into every activity and throughout each session. They guide each child very well because they know them very well.
50. The teaching supports very good progress. Even the very young children who have been in the nursery only a few weeks are already secure in the routines of the school; they show independence and that they are very much taking charge of their lives.
51. The very young children and the older children gain eager curiosity to find out and to investigate, confident to try things out. They do not give up but concentrate for long periods, even when they find something difficult. Although some are very anxious when they first arrive, they are soon confident when apart from their parents or carers. They feel they belong to the school and their group, and learn the rules and ways of treating others that this implies. They trust others but are equally keen to do things on their own, whether that is an activity dealing with their own hygiene and cleanliness, or dressing and undressing themselves. They care about others and also for themselves, stating their needs with confidence, while willing to discuss whether, for example, they should paint yet again or try something else.
52. Particularly good is the way children move from group activities to activities of their own choice. They do this sensibly, and once they have made a choice, they usually stick with it. Over and above this, they are willing to take part in other extension activities if asked, understanding the idea of a rota because it is fair. They realise that even if they cannot have their choice today, they can tomorrow or later in the week. They learn by doing and their play is full of purpose. They use their imagination when painting and play roles with others or when in the 'garage' or 'driving a coach'.
53. They gain a natural curiosity about the customs of others, revelling in the new experience and fresh ways of seeing things, especially when visiting other places such as a farm. They respect the feelings and views of others, and the older children have begun to realise that to disagree with someone does not make them their enemy. They form friendships easily and show loyalty, and relate well to adults. Above all, they gain a

confidence and independence based upon being valued and valuing their own achievements and identity.

Communication, language and literacy

54. Provision for learning is very good. The youngest children's language development is lower than average because they join the nursery with below average skills, but the older children's language development is at an appropriate level for their age. This shows they make very good progress and nearly all children are on target to meet the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some are likely to meet these goals by the time they leave the nursery.
55. Teaching is very good. This is because every adult places language development at the heart of all learning. Staff speak very clearly and this encourages children to speak clearly and learn how to structure sentences and use new words. They discuss problems with children, for example, when weighing ingredients for a cake and this helps children use talking to think through problems. This strong teaching threads through every activity. In turn, teachers use this approach to encourage children to listen carefully and think about the meaning of what they hear. This type of teaching extends to reading and writing. Although teachers hold special reading and writing sessions, they also build these activities into everything else, for example, addressing cards to go with parcels and reading signs to help find materials and equipment. Teachers do not 'rescue' the children when they meet difficulties, but caringly help them to find solutions for themselves. The children find this exciting because they learn to 'write' for themselves. The skill with which teachers know when to help and when to hold back shows their very good knowledge of how far each child has come, and where they need to go.
56. Learning is very good. Most children join the nursery with low levels of language development but make very good progress. There are several children who joined the nursery only half a term ago unable to speak confidently; they now speak clearly in structured sentences, confident to speak to any of the adults in the school. This confidence leads older children to begin to express their thoughts as questions and predictions, for instance, when guessing whether a magnet would pick up a material. They learn that speaking, listening, reading and writing are enjoyable and very useful parts of life.
57. Most children speak confidently and the older children use structured sentences, linking them together to explain, for example, the furniture in different parts of a playhouse or how a computer program works. They hold conversations with adults and each other; this helped them decide that they would use a van they had made to be a bus to take them on a trip, and thus led them to change the design. They enjoy rhymes and stories and the older children identify characters and can begin to retell familiar stories. Most as yet, however, tend to speak as though there are no other people around, because they do not realise that they need to build on what others say.
58. They make rapid progress in learning new words and think about the best word to use. For example, they enjoy the new words to use when playing in the 'garage'. They use language to express preferences and identify what is theirs and what belongs to others. Although not yet confident, they are beginning to use language to put objects under headings, first by using words for colours, and then for size. Some older children use words to group tools under their function, for example, musical instruments.

59. Children enjoy listening to stories. They understand that books are read from front to back, and stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. Most understand that print has meaning, and many grasp that groups of letter make words. Some begin to understand that letters have sounds that go together to make words, and a few very able children can read many words. Almost all children can recognise their written name and most can recognise words that label different equipment and activities. A strength of their learning is the way most children show they understand how important and useful reading is.
60. Children make very good progress with their writing. They quickly learn to hold a marker or pencil correctly, and to draw accurately both around shapes, for example, numbers and letters, and also to copy a given shape. Many can link shapes together, drawing circles and lines to form letters. Almost all 'write' lines appropriately even if they do not write the letters, for instance, when addressing postcards to send in the 'post office'. They know that if the address is not written properly it will not get to the right house. Most of the older children can write their own names and a few can write other words such as 'Daddy' without help. A strength of the learning is the manner in which children learn to write properly formed letters.

Mathematical development

61. Provision for learning is good and children's mathematical development is at an appropriate level for their age. Even in the short time since joining the nursery they have made very good progress; nearly all children are on target to meet the early learning goals, with around a quarter expected to achieve them before they leave the nursery.
62. Teaching is very good overall with some excellent features; for example, teachers use questioning skilfully and sensitively to challenge children's thinking and to enhance learning. A remarkable example showed a three-year-old enjoying working out, by a process of elimination, which of four postcards was inside a post box. Not only did he manage the task but also, following a very effective input from the teacher, he recorded his results beautifully using diagrams and symbols. A big strength of the teaching is that the teachers are expert at knowing when to intervene and when to step back and allow the children to explore and find out for themselves. A good example of this was seen with children designing and building a house out of large blocks. Solving the problem of 'how tall' and 'how many bricks' was sensibly left to the children to decide. A very effectively led discussion at the end gave the children an opportunity to share what they had done. Throughout the teaching there is an excellent balance between guided and free play, with resources well set out to encourage children to participate in a variety of activities throughout each session.
63. Learning is good overall. Good use is made of opportunities to increase children's mathematical vocabulary, for example, when 'sharing' the milk out during small group time. Children are starting to develop some mathematical language and use terms such as 'bigger', 'longer' and 'shorter' when comparing objects. Mathematics permeates all the activities set out in the different areas of learning and children thoroughly enjoy carrying out investigations to discover, for example, how many small containers it takes to fill the large container when playing in the sand. For a small number of children their learning is slightly held back as they have not yet developed the ability to settle into an activity and they enjoy moving from one activity to another. Each teacher is very aware of this and carefully planned targets for individual children, coupled with sensitive encouragement from the teacher, are starting to have a positive impact on learning.

64. Children are developing a good understanding of number. Well-designed number displays are evident throughout the nursery and teachers use number songs and rhymes effectively to help children to understand the number system. They use number 'fans' creatively to encourage children to match and say a number, and the more able children are even starting to think about one more or one less than a given number. The majority of the children can count correctly up to five objects, with a small number realising that the last number gives the total number in the set. They use ordinal numbers, such as first, second and third, well when describing the order in which children complete a task or stand in a line.
65. Children enjoy finding out about shapes and are confident when, for instance, creating a picture by moving different shapes across the computer screen. A few children correctly name shapes such as circle, square and triangle and pick out the 'big triangle' when sorting their shapes. Lovely work printing wrapping paper led to a group of children successfully devising and continuing a repeating pattern using two different potato prints. In their play, children are starting to use terms such as 'heavier' correctly when, for instance, filling an empty container with sand.
66. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory and the children made good progress. The careful and detailed teaching plans drawn up by the teaching team coupled with the excellent use of assessment information to ensure appropriate activities are devised, have greatly enhanced the quality of learning and teaching within this area since the last inspection. This in turn has led to the very good progress made by the children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Provision for learning is good and children make good progress. Most children join the school with a restricted knowledge of the world around them but leave for the infant school with good understanding and awareness. Most are on target to meet their learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
68. Teaching is good. Adults take every opportunity to enrich and extend the children's knowledge and understanding. The many activities are rooted in the real world for example, role play in a 'garage', 'writing' letters to be posted and delivered', and making printed paper to wrap a parcel. A strength of the teaching is the way adults treat the children as little grown-ups, expected to act responsibly and perceptively towards the world around them. Children also learn why it is necessary to care for their own health, partly by hygiene routines and care during physical activities, but also by learning about their own bodies and what they need to do to keep well.
69. Learning is good. Children quickly gain a curiosity and sense of adventure about the world around them, looking outwards from their homes, first to school and then to further afield. They rapidly gain a sense of life offering wide horizons. They also gain a sense of wonder that leads to caring for their world, seeing how plants grow when cared for, how wild flowers grow in the wild area and attract insects, birds and butterflies, and how animals need care and affection.
70. They build upon their curiosity and investigate possible roles in the real world, for example, through role-play in a garage and taking a trip in a coach. They investigate how things fit together to make models and train tracks, and find out what objects they can pick up with a magnet; some able children are beginning to predict which materials will stick and which will not. They use magnifying glasses to examine objects in detail. They are beginning to be able to compare different places they visit or learn about. By

meeting and talking to visitors to the school, they see how this learning fits with such jobs as being a fireman or a policeman. They understand the importance of 'people who help us'.

71. Particularly good is the way children use construction toys to enrich their play. They think through what piece is best where, and then adapt and improve with considerable skill. The cooking sessions are excellent. Children weigh and select ingredients, stir the mixture until it is smooth, and take great care when they ice the cakes. They are very conscious they must be 'just right'.
72. Children use computers confidently and there is very little random behaviour because they understand how computers can help them. They use them to count and group objects, paint, type letters and, during the inspection, to use simulated tools to paint objects, and to hammer and screw to make adjustments to a machine on the screen. They can use simple instructions to run a program, and understand how they can save and print their work. They quickly grasp that we can program machines such as a 'roamer' to move in certain directions and turn, although they find asking the machine to go programmed distances more difficult. Most children are on target to exceed the learning goals for this area.
73. They talk with excitement about personal events in their lives, for example, parties and special events in their families and are beginning to think about both special days in British society such as 'pancake day', and also special days in other cultures, for instance, the Chinese New Year when they cooked and ate noodles.
74. The children could be provided with more occasions to start thinking about the past linked to the present and the future. This is not so much a weakness as an area in which the school could offer greater opportunities. Provision would be better if this aspect of learning threaded through all activities rather than being dealt with at particular times.

Physical development

75. Provision for learning is very good. Standards of physical development are at the expected level for children of this age and most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. A few children will achieve this level by the time they leave the nursery. This represents very good progress.
76. As at the time of the last inspection, teaching and learning are good. Children move around the nursery with assurance and are sufficiently aware of other children and obstacles when playing outside. They extend their physical skills of co-ordination and control when balancing on, and travelling over, under and through, the well-placed logs and steps in the extremely well-resourced outdoor play area.
77. Children use a wide range of bicycles, tricycles, scooters, prams and trolleys very well to develop their co-ordination skills and to travel around the playground. Particularly well used are the tandem-style bicycles, and tricycles allowing children to travel together and to carry passengers. Children confidently push and pull the various trolleys and prams and they enjoy using the basketball hoop as a target when trying to throw a ball.
78. Staff encourage children to move confidently, while reminding them to be aware of their own safety and the safety of others. As well as the well-planned activities within the nursery, teachers lead specific sessions once each week in the nearby church hall. Although not observed during the inspection, these sessions have the added bonus of

allowing the children to experience being in a large hall, which some of them initially find intimidating. All staff are appropriately qualified to teach through the 'top play' initiative, and resources provided through this scheme are used effectively to develop children's physical skills.

79. Inside the nursery the different areas of learning are used well to develop children's hand/eye co-ordination and dexterity skills. Sand and water play is used effectively to develop children's skills, for example, when pouring into and out of containers and in using small containers to fill larger ones. The majority of children already hold a pencil correctly and are developing precision in the use of scissors. Children demonstrate increasing skill and control when using large building blocks and apparatus as well as when playing with the smaller doll's house and train set.
80. Through good routines, children are developing a sense of health and body awareness. They wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before preparing or eating food. They are starting to understand that attention to hygiene is important.
81. Resources for physical development are of very good quality and are well maintained. The very well resourced outdoor area provides an excellent opportunity for children to develop their physical skills and the very good indoor area, although small, allows children the opportunity to explore space and develop their co-ordination. Children identified as having special educational needs are very well supported in physical pursuits so that everything is available to them.

Creative development

82. Provision for learning is very good. Children make very good progress along the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. Most children are likely to reach these goals before the end of the Foundation Stage with several children doing so before they leave the nursery.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Throughout the nursery children are given many interesting and inspiring opportunities to be creative. They thoroughly enjoy visiting the excellent role play area and are really keen to use their imagination when, for instance, dressing up as a car mechanic and using 'real' tools to fix the cardboard box car suspended from the ceiling.
84. The large play area is used extensively to develop children's language and to encourage them to use their imagination and play collaboratively. Wonderful projects, such as the building of a coach out of large play apparatus, run over several days, with the teacher encouraging the children to work together to solve difficulties and in making decisions when, for instance, thinking what to use as a steering wheel.
85. Small but important refinements, such as using coloured water in the wet area and making play-dough smell of chocolate, give the children a marvellous opportunity to use their sight and smell when visiting these areas and to discuss what they see, feel and smell.
86. The children experience a wide range of well-planned musical activities with 'music time' taking place on a weekly basis. Children participate enthusiastically when singing favourite action songs and a few of the more able children tap out simple rhythms correctly when, for instance, thinking how many syllables in a name. Visitors are warmly encouraged to share any musical talents with the children. A father playing the keyboard, a student showing the children her clarinet and a visitor bringing in a small

violin, all add to the rich musical experiences enjoyed by the children and all help them to explore different sounds.

87. Children enjoy using the art area to create different effects and to explore various techniques. Careful planning allows children to develop a variety of skills; for example, printing, using string and paint to create a web effect, creating a collage or just experimenting with the different coloured paints at the easel. The majority of children hold a paintbrush appropriately and some know why they have a different brush for each colour and why they need thick and thin brushes. They enjoy mixing paints to see what happens and a few children are starting to think about creating different colours.
88. Inspirational planning coupled with very good intervention by teachers is producing very good teaching and this in turn is enhancing the progress made by children. This is the case both in this area of learning, and also in all the other areas of learning, and these improvements, since the last inspection, lie at the heart of a very effective school.