

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ANN BERNADT NURSERY SCHOOL**

Peckham

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 100768

Headteacher: Ms G McCall

Reporting inspector: Mrs R S Rodger  
10347

Dates of inspection: 12-14 June 2002

Inspection number: 230547

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 to 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ann Bernadt Early Years Centre Chandler Way Peckham London
Postcode:	SE15 6DY
Telephone number:	0207 703 6577
Fax number:	0207 708 2460
Appropriate authority:	Southwark LEA
Name of chair of governors:	Linda Daniels
Date of previous inspection:	8-10 June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10347	Mrs R S Rodger	Registered inspector	Personal, social and emotional development. Communication, language and literacy. Knowledge and understanding of the world. Physical development. Creative development Equality of opportunity	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievement. How well are pupils' taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
09132	Mrs J Godfrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19774	Mrs M Docherty	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20714	Mr M Carter	Team inspector	Mathematical development	Aspects of leadership and management

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The nursery school is situated in north Peckham in the Borough of Southwark. In 1997, the nursery became part of the Ann Bernadt Early Years Centre, which provides day-care for children aged nought to three years. The area is culturally diverse. The nursery has 93 children on roll. Most children attend the nursery full-time and a small number attend part time in the morning or afternoon sessions. The children come from a range of ethnic backgrounds including Black African and Black Caribbean as well as a small number of White UK children and White children from other European cultures. The children speak a range of languages at home as well as English including Yoruba; Ibo; Twi; Krio; Arabic and Spanish. Other home languages include Turkish, Chinese, Urhoba, Edo, Isa, Ga, Tigrigna and Luganda. Sixty-eight children have English as an additional language, of whom twelve children are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Twenty-three of the children are eligible for a free school meal, which is above average. Eight children have special educational needs, including one child with a statement of special educational need. Four children are provided with support by outside agencies. The special educational needs are speech and communication difficulties. One child has emotional and behavioural problems. There are five full time teachers, including the headteacher and seven classroom support assistants, including four nursery nurses. Three of the four teachers are appointed on a supply basis and have worked in the school for the past two terms. Staff turnover is high. Three teachers have left in the past two years and one permanent teacher has been appointed in that time. The future status of the nursery school within the early years centre is the subject of a review of provision in the area. A small amount of extra funding is received from central government to help nurseries to improve and this money is being used to provide additional staffing to support children with communication difficulties. Attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below average, although there are a significant number of children with at least average attainment.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The nursery is effective in several aspects of its work including support for children with English as an additional language. The celebration of cultural diversity is effectively fostered through the experiences provided for the children. The nursery is successful in promoting an inclusive curriculum. The children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development, speaking and listening, reading and writing. Provision in the outdoor environment is effective. Children behave well. The capacity for further improvement is hampered by difficulties in recruiting staff and the uncertainty over the future of the nursery. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Attainment in personal, social and emotional development is above average.
- Provides effectively for children with English as an additional language.
- Provides well for all areas of learning in the outdoor environment.
- Children make good progress in speaking and listening.
- Promotes good behaviour of the children.

#### **What could be improved**

- The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff.
- The inconsistency in assessment procedures.
- Provision for more able children.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The nursery was last inspected in June 1998. The nursery has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The governors are much more involved in the work of the school and provide good support for the headteacher. Improvements have been made to arrangements to check attendance. Attainment is much the same as it was. Standards achieved in personal, social and emotional development remain above average due to good teaching and the high priority given to this area of learning. The children's speaking skills and opportunities to read books have improved. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now no teaching that is unsatisfactory. There are still inconsistencies in assessment arrangements.

## STANDARDS

The children are likely to attain above the levels expected of children the same age in personal, social and emotional development by the time they leave the nursery. Attainment in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development and creative development is typical of children the same age. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is also generally typical of children the same age, but there are examples of above average attainment in the ways children design and make objects, talk about their lives, and the ways in which they examine equipment to see how it works. Based on the below average attainment when the children start the nursery and the average and some times above average levels they achieve by the time they start school, achievement is good. It is especially good in personal, social and emotional development. The children display high levels of involvement in activities, they are confident and play well with other children. The younger three-year-old children make the expected progress and attain the *yellow stepping stones*\*. They feel safe and secure in the nursery and show good levels of trust with adults. Children with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. Children with English as an additional language make good progress due to the well-targeted support provided by specialist staff. In some aspects of communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development, the more able children do not achieve as highly as they could because they have not had their specific needs identified and their teaching could provide more challenging work.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The children have good attitudes and enjoy coming to the nursery. They are happy and confident. They enjoyed making milk shakes and became very involved as they observed the fruit changing to juice in the liquidiser.
Behaviour	Behaviour is good. The children quickly learn the simple rules of the nursery. The occasional instances of bad behaviour are quickly and positively dealt with. The children are trustworthy and show good respect for property and resources.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the nursery are good. The children learn to show initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	There are no statutory requirements to report on attendance. Steps are taken by the nursery to ensure that all children start the nursery on time and parents are encouraged to inform the nursery when their child is going to be absent.

The children have learned to show good levels of independence and take responsibility. For example, during lunchtime they take their monitoring duties very seriously.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching throughout the nursery is satisfactory. No teaching was unsatisfactory which is an improvement since the last inspection. The additional staff who were appointed to support the children with English as an additional language are making an effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching. Those children follow a planned programme of work to improve their speaking of English Children are well-managed and staff have high standards for behaviour. Incidents of misbehaviour are promptly dealt with and used to help the children understand what is right and wrong. The environment is well organised to help the children become independent and to take responsibility. For example, during the outdoor time, the children can go in any of the four classes as well as

\* Each area of learning has stages of achievement called *stepping stones*. For example, as children start in the nursery they are expected to achieve the *yellow stepping stones*, then *blue*, *green* and by the time they have achieved the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the reception class, the *grey stepping stones*. Children will progress through the *stepping stones* at different rates according to their stage of development.

outside and choose what they do. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy is good and staff give this a very high priority. Teaching in all other areas of learning is satisfactory. A recently introduced teaching and learning policy is helping to provide consistency in all teaching and learning. However, this is a very recent change and some staff do not yet use the *stepping stones* to plan children's learning and the assessment arrangements are inconsistent across the four classes. Nevertheless, the team of supply teachers who have worked in the nursery for two terms is making a good contribution to the overall teaching and learning in the school, especially as they are unfamiliar with the areas of learning. There are a number of more able children in the nursery whose needs are not as well catered for as are the other children's. The staff are aware that development in this aspect of their work has been held up due to staffing difficulties. All the children are keen to learn and try hard to succeed.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All the nationally agreed areas of learning are taught. Learning in the outdoor environment is given a high priority. Good use is made of the community through visits to the library, the post office and visits by the fire service. Relevant topics of interest to the children are used as a basis for many of the activities planned for the children. The methods used to teach basic literacy skills are good; they are less well-developed to promote numeracy skills. The children have equal access to the curriculum apart from the children who are capable of higher attainment.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The children are included in all aspects of the work of the nursery. Parents are fully informed of their roles.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	This is a strength of the nursery. The children with English as an additional language are well supported by additional staff. They are included in all aspects of the life of the nursery. The practical approach to new experiences supports the learning of children new to the English language effectively.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory; for moral development and social development it is very good. There have been improvements in cultural development since the last inspection and it is now good. Good use is made of photographs to reflect the ethnic diversity of the children. The nursery promotes a range of celebrations to reflect the cultural diversity of the nursery and the wider world.
How well the school cares for its children	This is a caring school. The safe and secure environment promotes sound learning. There are some inconsistencies in the completion of assessment records.

The parents are very supportive of the work of the school. There are satisfactory links with parents. They receive a satisfactory amount of information, but sometimes too little notice is given to parents in invitations to attend the nursery for various functions. Parents support their child's learning at home via the nursery library.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff is unsatisfactory. The headteacher has been distracted from her main role by considerable staffing difficulties in recent years and the need to provide teaching support in several classes at short notice. She has maintained a focus on teaching and learning. The lack of permanent staff means that some areas of learning have not been developed as well as they should nor have the skills of the staff been used as effectively as they could have been.



How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There has been a good rate of improvement in recent months as a result of the appointment of a well-informed chair of governors who has a clear sense of the future direction of the nursery and is providing the headteacher with effective support on a regular basis.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is an unsatisfactory aspect of the leadership and management. The supply teachers have been inadequately checked once they started teaching and have been left to get on with their teaching. Arrangements for performance management of the headteacher have not yet been put into place.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Additional staff are used appropriately to support children with learning difficulties. Support for children with English as an additional language is good. The governors have a reasonable understanding of best value principles, although they are only just in a position where they have responsibility for some budget decisions due to recent partial delegation. The nursery gives satisfactory value for money.

The nursery is well-staffed with qualified staff, although the temporary status of three-quarters of the staff has caused difficulties in recent months. The outdoor accommodation is a strength of the nursery and compensates for the small classrooms. The nursery is well-resourced for all areas of learning, especially communication, language and literacy.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• They make good progress</li> <li>• They learn to behave well</li> <li>• The school works well with parents</li> <li>• The school helps their child become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work the children do at home</li> <li>• The information they receive about how their child is getting on</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents. They disagree that the children do not get enough work to do at home. There are many opportunities for the children to take books home which is generally what children of this age are expected to do at home. Opportunities have been provided for children to take games home and for parents to join early literacy classes. A numeracy workshop is about to start in the Centre, which will help parents develop their children's basic numeracy skills.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below average in all areas of learning. A small number of children had average levels of attainment when they started the nursery. A small number of three-year-olds currently attend the nursery part time. They have limited communication skills and speak mainly in single word sentences. Most of the younger children have limited social skills and are still learning to share and work as a member of a group. The four-year-old children, most of whom are due to leave the nursery at the end of term, achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development. Achievement in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development is good compared to their below average attainment when they start the nursery. Achievement in mathematical development is satisfactory. Attainment is typical of children the same age in communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Standards overall, are generally average with some above average standards achieved by some children in personal, social and emotional development and speaking and listening. Standards are generally the same as the last inspection where personal, social and emotional development was judged to be good.
2. A range of worthwhile activities is provided to encourage the children to listen. For example, during a storytelling session in the local library, the children listened to the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff ' very attentively and with interest. The children begin to take responsibility and show good levels of independence as they select their own storybooks during reading time. Children who are learning English as an additional language make good progress due to the well-targeted support they receive in small groups. The children with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.
3. The attainment of children with English as an additional language is satisfactory and they make good progress in communication, language, and literacy, and in all other areas of learning. The less experienced speakers of English work with a nursery nurse, financed from a government grant to support ethnic minority achievement. The very practical and visual curriculum offers bi-lingual children good opportunities to learn English as they work alongside their classmates and there are also times when children are offered additional support to learn key vocabulary and particular language skills which has a positive impact on their acquisition of English.
4. Standards achieved by children with special educational needs are generally below average, though progress is satisfactory, particularly when supported by classroom assistants and nursery nurses. Some children have individual support and benefit from adult-led activities that are designed to help them achieve their individual education plan targets. A small number of higher attaining children started in the nursery with average standards. The school has considered ways of providing these children with more challenging work but due to staffing changes no action has been taken yet to support their additional needs and as a result they do not attain as well as they could.
5. A high priority is given to personal, social and emotional development and the quality of teaching is good which is why standards are above average. The staff are very skilled at intervening at an appropriate moment to encourage the children to learn, for example, that it is unacceptable to push or pull toys away from other children just because they want them. The children are, as a result, confident and are encouraged to talk about what they are doing. The children have good social skills and are able to engage in imaginative role-play with great enthusiasm. The children have good attitudes to books. They share them with confidence and can 'read' favourite stories. In knowledge and understanding of the world, some of the children can describe how the fruit changes when it is liquidised. The outdoor area provides children with good opportunities to develop their skills in several areas of learning. Physical development is well fostered as the children climb, crawl, run, and balance on the good range of climbing equipment available. In creative development, the children can make patterns from their marks on paper, which were used to decorate bags made with string and paper.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

6. Children have good attitudes to school and behave well. This has a good impact on their learning. Personal development continues to be a strength of the school that is rightly valued by parents. This aspect was

judged to be a strength at the last inspection. All the parents who completed the questionnaire agreed that their children like coming to school.

7. The children know the routines and settle quickly to work. They particularly enjoy outdoor activities and listening to stories. They join in with action rhymes enthusiastically and are eager to learn new ones. Children are happy and confident in responding to teachers' questions and ask their own appropriate questions. They are interested in the planned adult-led activities and keen to produce cakes or a fruit salad, for example. One class investigated the difference between fresh, frozen and canned peas thoroughly and compared the difference in looks, smell and texture, which each child was very keen to test for themselves. Concentration only begins to wane towards the end of the day and some children drift aimlessly between activities when an adult does not help to hold their attention. Children are proud of their creations such as block towers and bags made out of paper, string and tape. They are intrigued by nature and show a good sense of wonder at the way peas grow like a vine and the development of caterpillars into cocoons and butterflies. While some of the younger children are shy and diffident, they grow in confidence with age and develop good levels of independence, selecting activities easily and with confidence. They usually persevere until tasks are complete, for example when constructing vehicles with construction material, making and serving a play dough lunch and washing and shampooing dolls.
8. Behaviour throughout the nursery is good. The children behave well in lessons and free activities and especially at lunchtime. They understand the staff's clear expectations of good behaviour and respond accordingly. Occasional incidents of bad behaviour are dealt with very quickly and positively with minimum disruption to the learning of others. A small group of children behaved very well on a trip to Peckham library in the school minibus and represented the school well in the community. There have been no exclusions. Children are polite and well mannered to strangers and each other. They have good table manners at lunchtime and wait patiently to be served. They ask politely for second helpings. Children are trustworthy and show good respect for property and resources. They are gentle with the caterpillars and careful in using books and equipment.
9. Bilingual children's attitudes are very positive. They work with great interest and join in all the activities, particularly when they can work alongside more experienced users of English. Children quite new to English join in the planned curriculum, even when the language is beyond their present competence. For example when three girls were reading out loud from a book they had made themselves, they were joined by a bilingual child who worked alongside making a good approximation to her classmates' language. Such opportunities give less experienced children a chance to rehearse the language of a given task in secure group settings.
10. Pupils with special educational needs are very positive about their learning, particularly when they are contributing alongside their classmates in practical activities. The school works hard to ensure that the pupils' specific learning needs do not become barriers to their progress. Pupils are encouraged to join in activities and become very involved in tasks. They generally demonstrate great self-control and care when working with resources, for example, cooking, and technology implements and in a "parachute activity" where they needed to concentrate on working as members of a team. The personal development and behaviour management of children with special educational needs is well supported by all members of staff, working to help them achieve specific targets,
11. Relationships across the school are good and have a positive impact on personal development. Children develop close relationships with teachers and support staff and constructive relationships with each other. They play happily in mixed racial and gender groups, co-operating well with each other. Older children happily support and guide younger, less confident, children in activities such as painting, creative play and on the computer. Occasional disagreements are sorted out very quickly. Children have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and respect each other's feelings. They are quick to apologise when necessary. They understand the need to take turns and the use a sand timer to take their turns fairly.
12. Personal development is good. Children show initiative and are willing to take responsibility. They register themselves sensibly on arrival and are well aware of classroom routines. They show good attention to hygiene and develop good independence in washing and drying their hands sensibly whenever necessary. Most need no reminding to wear protective aprons. They willingly help to tidy up toys in lessons and at the end of playtime. Lunchtime monitors take their duties very seriously and are very helpful in moving chairs, setting tables and serving lunch.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There were forty sessions observed in which the quality of teaching was very good in one lesson, good in sixteen and satisfactory in twenty-three lessons. No teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when one tenth was unsatisfactory. There have been a considerable number of staffing changes in recent years affecting both the teaching and support staff. The headteacher has frequently found herself acting as a supply teacher to provide continuity for one particular group of children who had a succession of temporary teachers earlier in the year. This situation has stabilised for the present. A new permanent teacher has been appointed for next term and an agency deputy headteacher should be taking up post in September to assist the headteacher with the leadership and management of the school. The additional staff appointed to support children with English as an additional language and children with special educational needs make an effective contribution to the overall quality of the teaching.
14. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy is given a high priority and is good. Adults encourage children to listen and to respond to questions. The methods used by staff to promote learning are very appropriate. The management of the children is generally good and staff are prompt to intervene when children are misbehaving. A lot of emphasis is placed on practical activities where the children can handle an object and use all senses to help to describe what it looks like or what it might be used for. For example, the children felt the surface of a coconut and were encouraged to describe the texture of the surface using words such as furry or rough. There are some missed opportunities to promote learning in other practical activities. Overall, the quality of teaching in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory, although it is consistently good in one of the classes. The quality of teaching in mathematical development is satisfactory. A regular baking activity does not make enough of the chances to promote mathematical learning when the children measure out ingredients. Good opportunities are provided to promote basic literacy skills; the children make a good attempt to write out the ingredients for making a cake. Planning is satisfactory overall and includes some worthwhile activities in the outdoor area. A small number of children are targeted each week for assessment purposes and assessments are transferred into their record of achievement. The extent to which this is carried out is inconsistent and could be better. Plans to give the higher attaining children additional support have been postponed. Several of these children were observed drifting aimlessly from one activity to another during the inspection.
15. Teaching methods are very supportive for the few children in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Small group activities and highly practical and visual tasks allow children to become very involved and they often hear the appropriate vocabulary from the children who are working with them. Activities. The specialist classroom assistant often plans work that allows them to practise key vocabulary. At other times, teaching builds on the children's previous learning when, for example, they are encouraged to recall previously read stories to check their recall skills. A child with English as an additional language confidently recalled the story 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'.
16. Teaching for children with special educational needs is appropriate, ensuring that activities are very practical and well demonstrated. They enable the children to see good models for ways of working. Small groups of children with special educational needs are given additional support by a classroom assistant with a specific target of improving speech and language skills. This member of staff is supported by a specialist speech therapist who is part of a joint local education authority and health authority project to help nursery schools to improve their provision in this area as early as possible. One-to-one classroom support is also given to a small number of pupils whose needs are more profound, and this allows them to make better than expected progress.
17. The quality of learning is satisfactory. The children learn most effectively in the areas of learning with which the staff are most confident. Personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills are generally well promoted due to the good knowledge and understanding of the staff and the priority given to encouraging the children to take part in group discussions. The children can often effectively recall earlier learning. For example, a four-year-old boy, when asking the name of the inspector made the link with herb growing in the garden of the nursery. He further knew how the herb could be used in cooking and for other purposes. Children are keen to learn most of the time. The large allocation of time to learning in the outdoor environment contributes well to the interest and enthusiasm of the children. The children are keen to learn most of the time. Although their level of interest tends to fall when time spent inside is too long as they do not have access to physical play in the small classrooms.

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

18. The range of learning opportunities provided for the children is broad and varied for both the indoor and outdoor curriculum and effectively supports children's development in the six areas of learning. Teachers and other staff implement the early years' curriculum very well, though there is not enough evidence to suggest that teachers are using the *stepping stones*\* to inform planning for assessment purposes. The school takes great care to ensure that part-time learners, who are generally the youngest children, have equal access to the focused activities planned for the whole group. Both full-time and part-time children have opportunities for specific group activities.
19. Support for children with special education needs is effective and they make satisfactory progress. Support for children who are learning English as an additional language is good and they achieve well. The school achieves its targets for educational inclusion, identified in its equality of opportunity statement, its race equality policy and the school's prospectus. However, an exception to this would be the opportunities that children with higher attainment are given to work at more challenging activities. The nursery does not analyse its data on children's performance to target activities that will allow higher attaining children to take the next steps in learning so that they are working to their full potential on all aspects of the curriculum.
20. The language specialist nursery nurse gives effective support to bi-lingual children, both across the curriculum and in small group work. She keeps daily records of children's' achievements and this information is used to track progress using "Early Years Bilingual Stages", which are sensitive to the social and linguistic competencies of very young bilingual children. These records contribute to the children's' overall assessment data and inform annual reports to parents.
21. Good opportunities are taken throughout the day to support children's learning of the basic skills of literacy. Some of these are spontaneous but others are carefully planned so that the teaching concentrates on particular aspects of literacy in both outside and inside activities. Literacy skills are developed in the group activities during story-time and in the production of a range of high quality books recording all aspects of the early years' curriculum. Each classroom has a good reading area and a writing area where children routinely write letters and labels, shopping lists and notices as part of their work across the curriculum. The attention given to promoting basic numeracy skills is less evident. Good emphasis is placed on incidental learning, such as counting the children in a group. The children are becoming more confident and competent in numeracy skills, routinely counting, sorting and matching, drawing on their numeracy knowledge in songs and rhymes. However, an adult does not always support activities provided in this area of learning and learning is less effective. Work in school-made books and on display indicates that numeracy is developed across all areas of learning. For example, the children made a book about numbers in the environment after a walk in the local streets. They also added the numbers of their own doors onto a 3-D map of the neighbourhood. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall. The children make visits to the post office, fire service and the public library, and have an annual trip to the seaside.
22. Children with special educational needs are identified as early as possible and given support from classroom assistants as they work alongside their classmates in adult-led small group activities. The nursery, therefore, achieves a high level of inclusion for these particularly vulnerable children. The nursery works hard to meet individual learning targets as set out in the children's individual education plans. The children take a full part in nursery activities and work co-operatively in the groups. Like all other children, they are expected to take on responsibilities for looking after nursery resources and behave co-operatively. When their behaviour is inappropriate they are asked to apologise and are given models of ways of doing this. The children with special educational needs are equally involved in moments of a more spiritual nature, for example expressing the beauty of flowers in paint for a nursery wall display, or considering the beauty and fragility of a bubble mountain in a science investigation.

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\* Each area of learning has stages of achievement called *stepping stones*. For example, as children start in the nursery they are expected to achieve the *yellow stepping stones*, then *blue*, *green* and by the time they have achieved the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the reception class, the *grey stepping stones*. Children will progress through the *stepping stones* at different rates according to their stage of development.

23. The nursery shares its site with the Ann Bernadt Early Years Centre and has some common policies and statements, though there is little evidence of shared curriculum activities. Parents are offered opportunities to use the community centre for a range of activities and some families have children in both institutions. Contact is made with the main infant schools to which the children transfer, and this helps with the planning of a smooth transfer when the children leave the nursery.
24. The children's personal development is effectively promoted and is a strength of the nursery as it was at the time of the last inspection. The children's personal development is promoted throughout the day by opportunities to work alongside others in harmony. Children take turns willingly and make decisions about how they will work on set tasks. They initiate activities with confidence and curiosity. For example, they turned a mathematics activity with the water tray into a medical drama, including the need to prepare medicine and soup for sick children who arrive in their hospital. They are aware of the need to take turns where resources are limited. They understand that they need to take responsibility and wear appropriate protective clothing for sand and water activities, give due regard to hygiene when touching food, and tidy away resources after each session. Children clearly understand when they have produced good work and call for recognition for their efforts with good judgement. For example, in a painting activity a child demonstrated that she knew she could make a new colour from mixing paint and called an inspector to check her prediction, correcting the inspector when she called purple "pink". Her colour awareness linked with her previous learning on colour tones.
25. The provision for children's spiritual development is satisfactory, which matches the findings of the previous inspection. The nursery has developed an ethos where children can learn about the wonders of the world and their own place in it, particularly through communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world areas of learning. There are, however, fewer planned opportunities for children to explore ideas through dance, drama and music. Very spiritual moments came about when a number of children were mesmerised by the beauty of a mountain of bubbles as they blew through straws and others were amazed to see fruits change to a pulp in a blender.
26. The nursery now makes very good provision for moral development and this is reflected in the high standards of behaviour from most children of all ages. Children are encouraged to consider other children's needs and never to hurt each other deliberately by anything they say or do. Teachers are very committed to this way of working and discuss misbehaviour when it arises with great sensitivity and clear commitment to the school's philosophy. Children understand the need for apology when they have been unkind to others.
27. The provision for social development is very good. The children work well together, take turns when necessary, help each other by communicating well, and contributing ideas and skills in group activities. For example, when a group of children was building a tower of blocks they gave each other encouragement as each extra block was carefully added, gave skilled help to steady the construction, and were sympathetic and sensible when it crashed to the floor. The teacher praised and admired the structure as it grew taller. The children were then motivated to decide what they needed to do to strengthen the structure rather than just being dejected by its inevitable crash. Children worked collaboratively when new children were welcomed into a group to contribute to the learning. In home corner role-play, pupils negotiated and took on specific roles in the domestic routines they dramatised. Children accepted each other's ideas for developing the activity and their harmonious creativity and insights enhanced the learning. For example, they agreed that a small chair, when pushed along, could substitute for a baby's buggy for an outing to the shops.
28. There has been an improvement in the provision for children's cultural development since the last inspection and provision is now good. The nursery has built up a significant resource of pictures, books and artefacts that reflect the cultural diversity of its school community. Very good use is made of photographs that celebrate the ethnic range of the children. The linguistic repertoire of the community is also acknowledged through the display of greetings around the school, the dual and parallel language books, and the CD-ROM of multi-lingual versions of well loved stories. Culturally important events are celebrated, for example the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne. The school's celebration of St Patrick's and St George's days give due regard to the history of constituent parts of the United Kingdom and the school also acknowledged Black History month, focusing on the achievements of black and minority ethnic peoples. The school celebrated Nigeria's independence day, giving prominence to an important date for the significant percentage of pupils whose families originate in that country. An international evening organised in the autumn term, where children wore the traditional dress of many countries in Africa and the Caribbean was another reminder of diversity within the black community.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. This is a caring school. Staff know the children well and take good care of their welfare and individual needs. A safe and secure environment promotes sound learning.
30. Procedures for checking and maintaining good attendance and punctuality have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory. The need for good attendance and punctuality is properly emphasised to parents and carers and they are expected to report reasons for absence. Registers are correctly marked, although not always promptly, at the start of sessions. They are accurate in case of an emergency evacuation. Individual and class attendance figures are checked weekly, but there is no overall record of attendance.
31. The nursery has good procedures for checking and promoting good behaviour. There is a positive and consistent approach by all staff including mealtime supervisors to the use of the behaviour code. Staff and children developed the well-established classroom rules and expectations of good behaviour are consistently high. The sensible and positive behaviour policy is shared with the early years centre so most children already understand the expectations when they arrive in the nursery. Good records are kept of all incidents of unsatisfactory or improper behaviour and parents are properly consulted when problems arise.
32. The attainment of the nursery children is assessed as they start in the nursery. However, this information is not analysed. The nursery provides sound support and advice for all children, informed by the checking of academic progress and personal development. Children's personal development is tracked through individual profiles. In some classes, a detailed sheet is completed on each child's progress in relation to specific learning objectives, but there is inconsistent practice between classes. At the end of their time in school useful records of achievement are compiled for each child to send to their primary schools. These are shared with parents and carers who have an opportunity to add their comments. There are no measurable outcomes from the assessment data.
33. Parents of bi-lingual children are given information through end-of-year school records, particularly in the communication, language and literacy area of learning, which is informed by the specialist nursery nurse's detailed linguistic records. The nursery carries out its statutory annual review of the stages of the special educational needs code of practice. Assessment data is collected and used to review individual education plans and to discuss progress with parents. The nursery involves external agencies when necessary and works hard to ensure that curriculum targets set out in the individual education plans are met. The nursery is confident that children are making satisfactory progress, although it does not check their progress systematically.
34. The nursery takes satisfactory care of children's welfare, health, and safety. Child protection procedures are satisfactory, although some difficulties in communication with social services means that the procedures laid down in the school's policy are not always followed precisely. The person with responsibility is widely known and appropriately trained. Classroom staff pay good attention to hygiene and the health and safety of children for example when preparing food and when taking children on a visit to the library in the minibus. Children are well supervised at work and play. Staff take good care to deliver children to the appropriate adult at the end of the day. First aid procedures are satisfactory, although some temporary staff cannot name the centre's official, trained first aid staff. Good records are kept of accidents and parents are informed of any incident involving their child. Evacuation drills are practised regularly and well recorded. It is unsatisfactory that the school still does not have formal risk assessments in place for particular school activities. The health and safety policy, although, satisfactory is generic and does not relate specifically to the school.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

35. Parents and carers like the school and most of the views expressed in the questionnaires were positive. All those who expressed an opinion agreed that their children like school and make good progress. They believe that teaching is good and that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. Inspectors agree with these positive aspects. A few expressed concerns about the amount of work their child gets at home. Inspectors judge this satisfactory. All children have the opportunity to take books home to share with parents and the centre organises workshops to help parents and carers guide their children's work at home. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about the level of information on their child's progress and the range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors judge these features satisfactory, although the changes in

teaching staff have had an adverse impact on both these aspects. There is some confusion among parents and carers about the respective responsibilities of the different management of the centre and the nursery.

36. The school maintains sound links with parents and carers that make a positive impact on the children's progress and achievement. Information provided to parents and carers is satisfactory. They are welcomed into classrooms and are able to talk to staff about any concerns. The prospectus and governing body annual report contain useful information and advice. Newsletters are produced spasmodically and together with other letters provide satisfactory information on day-to-day activities. Some parents would like to be given more notice of events in school, especially if they are working and have to make arrangements. Most parents speak English and the school does not provide information in any other language. There is a good parents' and carers' notice board in the entrance lobby that is shared with the rest of the centre and displays copies of shared policies and procedures. Many children take a book bag home with them each night and this is used for communication with parents when necessary. Children with special educational needs have a home contact book, which parents find helpful for exchanging information with school. Parents are invited to discuss their children's progress at consultation evenings, but only half of the parents attend. Parents are asked to contribute their views to a comprehensive record of achievement that contains detailed comments on personal development and each area of learning; these are passed to primary schools. Parents receive a summary of this in the form of a leaver's report. Information on the progress of younger children is usually communicated verbally. Parents and carers are told about the complaints procedure on arrival at the school but do not receive a written copy.
37. Any concerns that the school may have about pupils' learning are shared with parents, in some cases through daily communications set up when pupils' needs are extensive. The school and parents fill in a contact book when this is thought to be helpful. Parents' views are then relayed to the staff team who can give appropriate support.
38. Parents and carers make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning at home and school. They value the opportunity to borrow books on a regular basis. A sensible home school agreement was introduced last September. The centre organises workshops to help parents guide their children's learning in literacy, but most parents work and the workshops have not been well supported. The school provides a useful booklet for parents on helping and encouraging children to read. Plans for a family mathematics course are well advanced. A holiday play scheme was offered at Easter, but only a few children attended. Another is planned for the summer, but costs are no longer subsidised and are prohibitive for many parents. The school provides parents with some opportunities to help in school, but very few do. A mother, stepfather, and aunt provided good support to ensure children's safety on a library visit. The centre has a combined parent teachers association organised by the centre manager, which makes a positive social and financial contribution. The funds they raise are used to support community ventures such as the annual outing.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

39. The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff have not improved since the last inspection and there remain areas for improvement. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are unsatisfactory. Serious staffing issues in the past three years have detracted the headteacher from her main management roles of monitoring and evaluating performance, strategic thinking, and planning. There are three supply teachers and one permanent member of staff. The school has its full allocation of nursery nurses now but this has not been the case in the recent past. The instability of staffing and the succession of supply teachers in some classes have caused parents some concern. A contributory factor to the staffing problems is the future of the nursery school within an early years centre. A review by the local education authority of the provision has been undertaken but, as yet, no decisions have been taken as to what the future of the nursery school will be. While the uncertainty remains, the recruitment of permanent staff, already a difficulty in the area, is additionally hindered. A permanent teacher has been appointed from September and the headteacher plans to appoint a deputy headteacher through an agency. This will still leave two vacant permanent posts. Several areas of learning do not have a co-ordinator.
40. The headteacher has created a good climate for learning. The staff work well together and there is a good team spirit. Most children achieve well and the nursery has some significant strengths in its provision for outdoor learning and for children with English as an additional language. The recent implementation of a teaching and learning policy has ensured that the staff have a clear framework for planning learning indoors and outdoors. Termly visits by the local education authority advisory teacher have provided the staff with some feedback on their teaching through her paired monitoring of teaching with the headteacher. The three



supply staff in school for two terms have been provided with some feedback and generally work well as a team with the support of the headteacher and permanent teacher on the staff.

41. Until very recently, the governors have been ineffective in the support they have provided for the headteacher in holding her to account for the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery. The governors are now much more effective. They have a stronger strategic overview and commitment to the nursery school. Recently appointed governors are trained in performance management and able to work with the headteacher on this aspect of her work. Performance management is not yet fully in place. Performance objectives have not been set for the headteacher. A recently appointed chair of governors and another LEA co-opted governor are beginning to work with the headteacher to assist her in improving her role. The headteacher consulted with the chair of governors as she was writing the school improvement plan that includes a clear sense of what the priorities of the nursery should be. The delegation of greater financial responsibility to the nursery has been well managed with the support of the governors in securing training for key staff.
42. Currently, too much of the headteacher's time is spent troubleshooting. She covers for absences, takes home children who are not collected or are ill, and spends further time appointing temporary staff and dealing with issues raised by parents. She has not made it a priority to check what goes on in classrooms or to monitor planning and the quality of teaching with enough regularity. Some worthwhile initiatives, such as identifying the more able children in the school and providing them with more challenging work, have been put on hold until the staffing base is more secure. The areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have, in the main, been addressed although there are some residual areas such as setting up a system to audit voluntary funds and arrangements to carry out risk assessments.
43. The school improvement plan has the potential to develop the school well and has, at its heart, improving the basic skills of the children and promoting inclusion. These issues are well developed in the nursery. Useful measurable targets have the potential to provide a rigorous evaluation of the nursery's performance over the next year. However, the nursery does not have systems in place whereby performance of the children can be measured. On entry to the nursery, the children are screened to assess their speaking and listening skills and children with special educational needs are identified. No other use is made of this information for measuring the value added by the nursery in promoting the children's basic skills. Without the assessment of the children's progress, the measurable targets in the school improvement plan cannot be evaluated.
44. The school has an equal opportunities policy, a teaching and learning policy, and a race equality policy. This demonstrates the school's interest in achieving inclusion and equality for all its children. The headteacher is the temporary special educational needs co-ordinator and works to ensure that the staff understand the revised code of practice for special educational needs. The school welcomes and supports children who arrive with special educational needs already identified by early years centres, child clinics and parents. The headteacher's leadership in this matter sets a positive context for securing children's full participation in all nursery activities.
45. The nursery is in a period of transition towards taking greater responsibility for its finances. The financial arrangements for staffing have been only recently delegated. Some training has been available for this but more is needed especially for new governors. However, the governors are provided with details of how the spending of the budget progresses through the year, but they have few means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of the spending. Financial planning is constrained because a decision is awaited about the possible amalgamation of the school and the early years centre, which is based at the same site. It is also constrained by uncertainty about future numbers attending the school and the difficulties in recruiting teachers on a permanent basis. The school's development plan is costed in terms of staff time but not in terms of the financial implications of priorities. New computer-based control systems are being effectively introduced and the school's finance officer plays a major role in this. The systems for financial propriety are satisfactory but the school's private fund is not formally audited. The headteacher is keen to obtain the best value from spending, but there are no systems to ensure this. Funds gained through specific grants are used effectively for their intended purpose although monitoring of the impact of this spending is only informally carried out by the headteacher. Since the delegation of staffing finance, the school has been informed of some 16.5 per cent of the budget carried over from the last financial year. Due to the uncertainties described above, the spending of this has yet to be planned. The cost per pupil is high, but overall the nursery gives satisfactory value for money.
46. The school has sufficient suitably qualified teaching and support staff to teach children of nursery age. The school has recently had severe difficulties in recruiting teachers but the appointment of three temporary

teachers has ensured that children's learning has not suffered. There is no staff handbook and temporary staff had unsatisfactory induction, especially on issues of policy, procedures and health and safety. However they are confident that support is available on request. There are currently no newly qualified teachers. Classroom assistants provide good support to children with special educational needs and mealtime supervisors reinforce expected high standards of behaviour well. Administrative and premise staff make a sound contribution to the smooth running of the school.

47. The quality of accommodation is satisfactory. The school is situated within a community centre that includes a community room, a crèche and provision for early years. The four nursery classrooms are adequate but small and probably rather cramped in inclement weather. The school has shared use of a hall, staff room, community room, and office space. There is adequate storage space within classrooms, but not in the hall, which is cluttered by larger pieces of equipment, chairs and trolleys. Accommodation is clean, secure, and well looked after. The decoration is light, bright, and cheerful. A good mixture of children's work, published material, and photographs is displayed and enhances the learning environment well. Good use is made of the well-resourced outdoor area, which includes a hard play surface and a good-sized grass area. There is a good safety cushion surface beneath the climbing apparatus. There is still no permanent shaded area outside, but the school can provide temporary shade when necessary. The building is fully accessible to wheelchairs and has a toilet for the disabled.
48. Learning resources are good. The outdoor area is well-resourced to cover all areas of learning and good use is made of this area to support children's learning. A high priority is given to providing children with a good range of picture books in well-resourced reading areas.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by :
  - implementing more regular checking of teaching and learning and taking effective action to improve the quality of teaching;
  - delegating curricular roles and responsibilities to key members of staff;
  - carrying out appraisal in line with performance management requirements for the headteacher as soon as possible;
  - making greater use of the analysis of performance data to evaluate progress towards the targets set out in the school improvement plan;
  - implementing effective induction procedures for newly appointed staff.  
(References can be found in paragraphs, 39,41, 42, 43, 46, 58, 65)
  
- \*Provide appropriate activities for more able children by:
  - identifying the higher attaining children when they start the nursery;
  - providing appropriately challenging activities, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development areas of learning.  
(Paragraphs 4, 19, 42, 58, 67)
  
- Improve the consistency of assessment procedures.  
(Paragraphs 14, 32, 33, 43)

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES THAT THE GOVERNING BODY MIGHT LIKE TO CONSIDER

- Complete the outstanding issues from the previous inspection: auditing the school funding account; and carrying out risk assessments.

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\* Included in the school development plan

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	16	23	0	0	0
Percentage	0	3	40	57	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of sessions observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each session represents more than two 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)	75.5
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	68

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	N/a
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School data	N/a
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*There is no statutory requirement to report on attendance figures in a nursery school.*

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	219

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.75
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	340346
Total expenditure	307921
Expenditure per pupil	4507
Balance brought forward from previous year	10325
Balance carried forward to next year	22100

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
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	75
Number of questionnaires returned	31

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	97	3	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	29	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	29	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	26	26	0	13
The teaching is good.	65	35	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	29	19	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	29	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	35	3	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	42	48	6	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	58	29	6	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	42	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	29	13	0	13

**Other issues raised by parents**

Parents were concerned about the mobility of staff in recent months.

## **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**

49. The Foundation Stage comprises children age three to five years of age. It is based on six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Each area of learning has stages of achievement called *stepping stones*. For example, as children start in the nursery they are expected to achieve the *yellow stepping stones*, then *blue*, *green* and by the time they have achieved the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the reception class, the *grey stepping stones*. Children will progress through the *stepping stones* at different rates according to their stage of development. Children in a nursery school will only follow the first part of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

50. Attainment in this area of learning is generally higher than that achieved by children the same age and achievement is very good. By the time they come to the end of their time in the nursery most children are achieving the *blue stepping stones* with a high proportion achieving many of the *green stepping stones*. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A very high priority is given to this area of learning. The children develop very good social skills, due in part, to the wide range of social occasions taking place in the nursery day by day. The children show good levels of independence as they take responsibility for putting away equipment and get ready to enjoy the lunchtime routine and snack times. Four-year-olds get involved in activities and sustain concentration for a long time. The children have high levels of confidence and know how to conduct themselves with other children due to very good explanations and the modelling of appropriate behaviour by the staff. For example, staff praised good behaviour and intervened appropriately when children grabbed toys by demonstrating how to ask politely when they wanted something from another child. The children listen well at those times and model the appropriate behaviour on other occasions. The staff take every opportunity to model appropriate behaviour which has a very good impact on the children whose behaviour is generally good. On another occasion, two boys showed considerable care and concern when a younger child appeared to have cut herself by carefully wrapping her hand in a paper towel. The parents spoke positively of the ways in which their children's personal and social development had improved during their time in the school.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is good because the staff have high expectations. They are consistent in the methods they use to promote the children's personal development. They listen to the children and respond to their needs promptly. As a consequence, the children have very positive attitudes and are keen to contribute in lessons. They understood the principles of fair play once it had been explained to them and contributed well in 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' outside. The children with special educational needs are fully integrated and are well supported by other children in their play. They accept sensibly that at times there are children who show challenging behaviour. At all times, this is extremely well managed by the staff. The small classrooms pose a challenge for some children because movement is quite restricted. Consequently, a large amount of time is spent outside where the children have more space to take the initiative and explore the living things in their environment. The two-weekly planning makes appropriate reference to this area of learning, although different *stepping stones* are not identified to allow for the wide range of ability in each class. There is an appropriate balance between adult-directed activities and activities chosen by the children.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

52. Standards are generally typical of children the same age in reading and writing and achievement compared to the below average attainment when the children start in the nursery, is good. A higher number of children attain above average standards in speaking and listening than is typically found and there is very good achievement in speaking and listening. Almost all children are bilingual, but only about one twelfth start in the nursery in the early stages of English language acquisition. They are well supported by all the nursery staff and by specialist staff. All learning in the nursery has promoting speaking and listening skills as a central aim. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning is good overall.
53. The four-year-old children can listen to a story and show interest in the print. A majority of the children know the names of the letters of the alphabet. Outdoor games provided a good opportunity for children to listen to and follow instructions as they played a ring game with an adult. Three-year-olds are less attentive but have



older children as good models. Children with special educational needs are well-supported in small group activities, sometimes away from the hustle and bustle of the classrooms. For example, a group of four children worked with a classroom assistant listening to the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Good use was made of resources to support the story and involve the children as they chose the appropriate food and then placed it in sequence on the whiteboard. Good encouragement was provided for a child with very limited communication skills to persevere, find the correct fruit and celebrate her success. Support for the classroom assistant is provided as part of a local education authority project on developing speaking and language skills. The project provides training and support activities for the classroom assistant to continue working with selected children on a daily basis. The progress of the children is carefully monitored on a day-to-day basis and the speech and language therapist carries out evaluation of the work of the classroom assistant fortnightly. This is an effective initiative.

54. Support for children with English as an additional language is provided on four days each week. The nursery nurse spends a day in each classroom supporting children in all the activities that are taking place. This is effective inclusive practice. There is also support for the other children who join the group of children playing a language game. All staff give a high priority to those children in the early stages of English language acquisition by encouraging them to speak and providing good one-to-one support as required.
55. The children have very good attitudes to books and readily turn to them independently as well as in small groups with their teachers. Many children recognise the initial letters of their own name in story titles. A group of three children read a familiar text and substituted each others' names for that of the story and continued to show good awareness of rhyme and alliteration as they chanted the story together. There is excellent scope for children to take books home and share with parents. Each classroom has a loan system self-managed by parents. The early years centre has a community worker who also has a library club to which nursery parents' can subscribe and borrow two or three books every week. The take-up of parents joining is very high. On a weekly rotation, each class visits the local library and hears a story with the librarian as well as borrowing a book. Parents come and support the children as they walk from school to the library each Friday afternoon. Parents are expected to help their child recognise their own name at the start of each session as they self-register.
56. A high priority is given to developing early writing skills. The children observe the staff writing in several ways, for example, as they write their names, instructions given by a child or compile a shopping list. About half of the children can write their name recognisably. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper in their play and do so with confidence. They write captions for their paintings, have written little books and are encouraged to write their name. The more able children can form recognisable letters and can copy write with reasonable accuracy. Based on the below average attainment on entry to the nursery this is good achievement. Writing is encouraged in other areas of learning. For example, children attempted to copy a list of the ingredients needed to make a cake.
57. The children are encouraged to reflect on the language they use before answering questions. Planned opportunities to listen to alliteration in phrases such as 'Sip your soup up slowly Sam' help to develop the children's confidence as they try to say the same sentence quickly. Planning identifies the new vocabulary to be introduced in each area of learning. Staff have a good understanding of the cross-curricular nature of this area of learning. The provision for reading and writing is given a high priority in every classroom where there are well-resourced reading and writing areas and displays reflecting many well-known stories.

### **Mathematical development**

58. Attainment is generally typical of all children of this age with most four-year-olds achieving within the *blue stepping stones*. It is reported that many children start in the nursery with a basic knowledge of numbers and can count confidently. This attainment is not built upon sufficiently and achievement overall is satisfactory. The needs of the higher attaining children have not been taken account of in the provision for this area of learning. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This area of learning has a co-ordinator but, due to other priorities, she has not met the targets on her action plan.
59. The children learn to count in the course of the nursery day. They count objects on a trolley and compare one group of objects with another. During registration, the numbers of children present are counted. The children learn that the passage of time can be measured through using a sand timer to show how long they can stay on the computer or use the bicycles outside. This helps the children to learn how long five minutes is. The high achieving children achieve the *blue stepping stones*. A small number of four-year-olds can measure using non-standard measures when counting how many containers of water are needed to fill a

large jug. The children frequently sing counting rhymes such as 'Five Little speckled Frogs'. Some four-year-olds can read the date and count the days passed in the month.

60. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some staff have weaknesses in their knowledge of this area of learning and do not always extend the children's knowledge and understanding. While activities are planned to promote understanding, the absence of an adult means that sometimes opportunities are missed to count or to identify numbers on a floor puzzle. The children were observed placing numbers back to front and shape puzzles were completed but opportunities were missed to name and talk about the properties of the shapes. The intervention of an adult in the construction area effectively helped the children learn the language associated with size as they built tall towers and understood how to compare a tall tower with a shorter one. The planning does not give this area of learning a high enough priority in the adult-led work. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

61. Children generally attain at levels typical of children the same age and reach the *blue stepping stones*. The children achieve satisfactorily. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in one of the classrooms is good due to good knowledge of the *stepping stones*. Good support is given to children with English as an additional language through the well-planned attention to developing their understanding of English through practical activities and they achieve well. Children with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.
62. During the inspection, a food technology-based topic was the focus for the month. As a result, there was a high priority given to this area of learning in the daily planned adult-led activities. As a result the children made good progress in using their senses to develop their vocabulary. For example, they used their sense of touch, sight and smell to observe the changes in fruit as they cut it up to make fruit salad. They made cakes and examined the contents of a coconut.
63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good when the children are encouraged to describe the fruits but, at times, there are missed opportunities to involve the children during baking sessions. The children learn to observe the changes in milk when adding fruit to make milk shake, but the children are not encouraged to read the labels as they select various colourings. Over brisk introductions to new activities sometimes means the children do not have time to question or explain their understanding. For example, when the children watched seeds being placed on moist paper to grow.
64. Good use is made of the outdoor environment to extend children's knowledge and understanding. Several indoor activities are moved outside where there is more space, which is effective. Children develop curiosity and interest as they explored how liquidisers and food mixers worked. Equipment to make fruit juice is demonstrated to the children and they learn that the machines need to be switched on. They showed great surprise when the solid fruit was liquidised into juice. This helped them to learn that fruits change. This helped them to understand that materials change. Resources used to help the children learn about fruit reflected the diversity of cultures in the nursery well. Weekly planning identifies expected learning at three levels. This was not seen put into practise by some staff during the inspection.

### **Physical development**

65. Attainment is generally typical of children the same age with most four-year-olds achieving the *blue stepping stones*. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. For almost half of their day the children have access to a well-resourced outdoor area. This makes up for the lack of space in the classrooms. The provision outside is well planned and is a strength of the nursery. There is some uncertainty about who has overall responsibility for the outdoor area. All staff plan to use this every two weeks and include all areas of learning and review the provision for the adult-led activity on a daily basis. This level of attention to the outdoor environment is generally better than is generally found in nursery schools.
66. Children can move freely and develop a sense of space as they negotiate with each other as they run around the soft play surface and climb the steps and frames to balance on the equipment. They are encouraged to repeat movements and make effective use of large construction equipment to balance blocks. The children learn the rules of competitive games. For example, as they played a tag circle game, the children learned to take turns. In a very good example of teaching and learning the children listened to the heart beat of a teacher by using a stethoscope to count the beats before she ran around the field and then discussed the change in the heart rate after she had run around for several minutes. This effectively helped the children

understand the effects of activity on the body. The four-year-old children have well developed skills for the use of scissors and cutting. For example, the children independently made paper bags with string or paper handles showing good skill in using sellotape to stick the paper together. They very proudly showed their bags on their shoulders to their friends.

67. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a good understanding of the contribution of the outdoor area to learning in this area of learning. However, a lack of knowledge of the stages of development towards the early learning goals means that opportunities to extend the children's learning are sometimes overlooked. For example, on the climbing apparatus, the children are not encouraged to move in different ways or to pay attention to how they land.

### **Creative development**

68. Attainment is generally typical of children this age. Most four-year-olds are achieving the *blue stepping stones*. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is no co-ordinator for this area of learning. The planned activities frequently lack a specific focus with the result that some opportunities to extend learning are missed. Generally, many activities in this area are child- initiated from the range of activities available inside and outside.
69. Learning is more effective when supported by an adult. The children enjoyed making patterned folders using string and tape after clear instruction and demonstration from an adult. The children take part in imaginative play as part of story times, such as the retelling of 'The Three Little Pigs' using finger puppets. This is effective, due to the encouragement provided by the teacher. A row of bells strung up outside provided a good example of the way the children could make their own tunes as they tapped the bells to their own rhythms which is higher than average attainment. In a more formal situation, a group of twelve children sat in a circle singing and beating a range of musical instruments to the beat of the songs. Children used tambourines, drums, bells, and shakers with reasonable levels of confidence, which is typical of the *blue stepping stones*.
70. The outdoor area is used extensively to promote learning. A spacious wooden playhouse is satisfactorily used to promote domestic play in a sheltered area away from the hustle and bustle of the large physical equipment. This area allows the children to take on roles and play alongside other children. The children take part in movement. For example, they listened to music and mimed the life cycle of the butterfly to the music. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory, but there are some weaknesses in the teaching because of a lack of familiarity with the stages of development identified by the *stepping stones*.