

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BILSTON NURSERY SCHOOL**

Bilston, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 132018

Acting Headteacher: Mrs J Rix

Reporting inspector: Mrs B Walker  
1530

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 230871

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wolverhampton Street Bilston Wolverhampton
Postcode:	WV14 0LT
Telephone number:	01902 556416
Fax number:	-
Appropriate authority:	Wolverhampton Borough Council
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Andrew Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	-

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1530	Mrs B Walker	Registered inspector	Provision for the under fives Special Educational Needs	Characteristics of the school The school's results and achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
19340	Mr T Heavey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils The school's partnership with parents
4343	Ms S Billington	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The curriculum and other learning opportunities

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bilston Nursery School was designated as a separate nursery school in May 2000 after being part of a primary school for some years. Children are admitted from the age of three. Most have between three and five terms before moving to the local primary school in the September or January after their fourth birthday. There are currently 50 pupils on roll, all attending part-time. A mixture of three and four-year-olds attends each session. Numbers are increasing. The school benefits from close links with Sure Start and is part of the Early Excellence programme in Wolverhampton.

Within the local community unemployment levels are high, there is a high level of social deprivation and some families experience some difficult circumstances. About half the children come from ethnic backgrounds other than English, and 26 per cent speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection there were children from Punjabi, Afro-Caribbean and Italian backgrounds. Most understood English well, but two were at early stages of learning English as an additional language. Five children have been identified as having special educational needs, most commonly in the area of language and communication.

On entry to the nursery, the majority of children have skills below average. Their language is particularly limited, with many speaking only in single words or sometimes not at all.

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

The nursery has a number of strengths and children benefit greatly from the time that they spend there. Some areas of provision need attention to help the children do even better. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good features. Children's progress is sound overall and good in some areas of learning. There are some weaknesses in the provision for speaking and mathematical experience, and some children do not make a firm start with these areas. The curriculum is interesting and varied. Higher attaining children are not always given enough challenge. Day to day management is sound. The acting headteacher is developing leadership skills but has had too little time to develop clear management systems.

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

- Very good provision for and teaching of children's personal, social and emotional development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Very good provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children's behaviour is very good.
- Children's attitudes to learning are very good.
- The staff teamwork is very good.
- Relationships are very good.

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

- Children's skills in speaking and numeracy.
- Use of the tracking information to ensure new learning.
- Management systems to ensure ongoing school improvement.

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

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

This is a newly formed school, which has had no previous inspection.

## STANDARDS

Performance in:		KEY
Language and literacy	D	A-well above average
Mathematics	D	B-above average
Personal and social development	C	C-average
Other areas of the curriculum	C	D-below average
		E-well below average

In language work, children listen well and pay good attention to the adults. They learn to enjoy books, and are clear about the difference between text and pictures. Early writing is satisfactory; children learn that writing is used in a variety of ways and they begin to use and understand the letters and their sounds. Progress in these aspects of language and literacy is satisfactory, but speaking skills are unsatisfactory and many children do not reach expected levels. Progress in mathematical development is unsatisfactory and expected levels are not achieved. Children make good progress in their personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. By the time they leave the nursery, many reach the levels expected of four-year-olds in these areas. Children's personal and social skills are developed well. Children quickly learn the routines and expectations of the nursery and learn to move around the different areas and choose activities independently. Most are still very dependent on adult help to complete or extend their activities. Some talk or play together well in some situations, but others have little to say most of the time and are very dependent on adult support. Children learn successfully about the world around them through visits to the shops and the bus depot. They understand people's jobs, such as those of the local fire-fighters and the crossing warden. They draw and paint, sing and make music satisfactorily. Outdoors, they are confident with a wide range of equipment for riding and games. Progress overall is satisfactory, except for the higher attaining pupils, who could do more.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children enjoy coming to school and are keen to get involved in the practical activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The children respond well to the nursery's clear and consistent expectations and routines.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children learn to deal with their personal needs and understand what is expected of them. They respond well to adults and learn to work and play with others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Staff encourage parents and carers to bring children to nursery regularly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years
Lessons seen overall – 17	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.*

Teaching was satisfactory in 56 per cent of lessons and good in 28 per cent. Very good teaching was seen in 16 per cent of lessons, which were for physical development. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Most of the teaching is done by the three nursery nurses. The teaching helps most children to move on in their learning. The acting headteacher and the nursery nurses work well as a team and make sure that children have a wide range of experiences. Nursery sessions are carefully planned and well organised with good routines. All staff use talk well to help children understand what they have to do, and are clear and consistent in their guidance to children. Resources are used well to help the children to learn, especially in outdoor play and creative work. The teaching of literacy is usually sound, although children are not always expected to use the new words which are introduced by staff. Lessons in numeracy showed sound teaching, but mathematical work isn't provided daily and isn't always sufficiently well structured. The children with special educational needs receive good attention from teachers and their progress is evident. Higher attaining pupils are not singled out, so teaching does not include specific attention to improving the progress or attainment of these pupils. Children are tracked during activities so that staff can see how well they learn, but this information is not used to help plan for the next stage of learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is a broad range of experiences provided in most areas and there is a good emphasis on learning through play and practical work. The planning and provision for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world and for their physical and creative development is particularly good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Children who may have special educational needs are identified early and make satisfactory progress. They are monitored on a regular basis. Higher attaining pupils receive no special provision.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school is successful in meeting many of the needs of these children and has recently been allocated some funding for further specific support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Many opportunities are provided to help the children understand the needs of others and the world around them and to appreciate the similarities and differences of a range of cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Staff know children well and work hard to make them feel special and safe. The tracking of pupils takes place regularly, but the information gathered is not used to plan for extended learning.

Staff welcome parents into the nursery and exchange information with them about the children. Staff send a book bag home and offer guidance to help parents and children share stories together.

The curriculum is well planned and structured to give children a wide range of experiences and opportunities, helping them to make good progress in their personal development, understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. The nursery sessions are very well organised and supported to help personal and social development. The curriculum structure for language work is sound except for supporting the growth of children's spoken language. Provision for mathematical work is insufficiently structured to ensure the steady growth of understanding.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The acting headteacher has worked with the local education authority to ensure an effective start for the school. A development plan has been prepared and early leadership is identifying a clear direction. Day-to-day management is effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors of the local primary school offer support to, and have oversight of this nursery school. Direct responsibilities fall to the local education authority, which is the appropriate authority. The school is supported well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's development plan shows the intention to improve, but at present, too little information has been gathered about the school's strengths and weaknesses to plan the best ways forward. Evaluation of teaching and the use of assessment are not developed at this stage.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staff, space and equipment are all used very effectively.

The nursery is staffed effectively. The resources are very well organised and used very well. Accommodation, both indoors and out, is spacious and used very well. The bulk of the budget is managed by the local education authority. The nursery has received some grants and some funding for resources and staff training, which have all been used well.

## 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>• The children like coming to nursery</li> <li>• Children make good progress</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature</li> <li>• Parents feel this is a good school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents either felt that their children did not get the right amount of work, or were not sure whether they did or not. A few were unsure whether the range of activities was interesting.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with most of the positive points made by parents. Most of the teaching seen was satisfactory, but some was good or very good. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The nursery provides a good range of different work for children in each session, but could further develop this by increasing the structure for the literacy and numeracy and the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Children find the range of activities interesting and stimulating.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children start the nursery with a very low base of skills. They benefit well from the broad curriculum and the effective teaching. They make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in some areas of learning, particularly in their personal and social development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. By the time they leave the nursery they are prepared for starting infant school and are in line to achieve expected levels in personal development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. In language and literacy, children's skills in listening are as expected and they successfully learn about books and writing but their skills in speaking are below expectations. Most children do not achieve expected levels in mathematical development.
2. In personal and social development pupils make good progress. They quickly develop the confidence to relate to all the adults and the other children. They learn to take turns and share. They develop socially, start to play together and contribute to group work. Their ability to care for themselves and deal with their personal hygiene increases. They understand the nursery routines and follow them well, making a good contribution at clearing-up time. Most show good awareness of others and take an interest in them by helping and supporting other children during work and play sessions.
3. In language and literacy, children learn to listen carefully and follow instructions. Some will answer questions, although often with just a few words. Some children have speech problems and find it difficult to speak clearly. Some children respond with gestures instead of words. Older children talk together during their play or work and become quite animated. Children enjoy stories and show some interest in books, but for the younger children this is limited to rushing through the pages quickly, unless staff help them. Older children show more concentration and give attention to the sequences of pictures. Children learn to hold the book the right way up, follow the pages in the right order and understand the difference between text and pictures. There was only little evidence to suggest that children make a clear start on reading; a few showed that they know some letter sounds. All learn to recognise their names and some children learn to write them. Children are introduced to other kinds of writing such as lists and invitations, so their awareness of different kinds of writing grows.
4. In numeracy, children have experience of recognising numbers, counting and matching. They order objects to five and sometimes to ten. However, this learning is often uneven because of the limitations of the provision, which includes lively activities, but is insufficiently structured. As a result, some children, especially older ones and those who could be higher attainers, do not learn or achieve as well as they should in numeracy.
5. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, children respond well to a good range of opportunities. They know about their families, the local shops, the fire service and the way that buses are cleaned. Some can explain the traffic lights and their purpose. Children are interested in living things and the environment. With adult help they choose the tools to work with as they make collages or fix cars. On the computer they use the mouse or the keyboard and follow a simple program with help.

6. Children represent their ideas and observations in drawings and paintings using pencils, crayons and paint with increasing control. Their work shows increasing detail and figures become recognisable as children's skills develop. They join in singing and attempt rhythms with musical instruments. They take on the role of fire-fighter in the play area, using the equipment and the uniforms with understanding.
7. Children ride wheeled vehicles such as bikes and cars with confidence and good control, showing good awareness of the space and care for other people. They can control large balls, showing increasing accuracy. They enjoy using the climbing frame indoors and running, balancing and jumping outdoors. Children's skills in using scissors, pencils, paint-brushes and other small tools improve gradually.
8. The overall picture of attainment and progress is satisfactory with some additional strengths and some areas where more could be achieved. Opportunities for reading, writing and number work are offered in the range of work. Many children do not speak enough and do not practise the new words which they meet through their school experiences and play activities.

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

9. The very good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are major strengths of the school, and greatly enhance access to learning for all the children who attend. Parents comment very favourably on their children's enthusiasm for the school and the warmth of its atmosphere.
10. Children settle very quickly into the nursery. Recently, some of them have already attended the new "Little Smarties" Parent and Toddler Group that shares premises with the nursery. As a result, they have learned to socialise well and to relate to the nursery staff. Children in the nursery demonstrate great enthusiasm for the various activities, largely because of the interesting and varied way in which members of the staff team engage the children's attention. As a result, children apply themselves very well and make good progress in some of their development.
11. This is a happy school where expectations for behaviour are high and where the school's code of conduct is applied consistently. Children feel secure and confident. They respect the staff and readily follow their wishes. Their behaviour is very good.
12. The very good relationships in the staff team have a calming and reassuring effect on the children, who in turn relate very well to one another. The effectiveness of the behaviour strategy is clearly visible in the warm and supportive relationships. Any inappropriate actions are discussed and explanations are always given, so that the child can think things through.
13. Children develop a good sense of personal responsibility and respect for others. During a ball game on a windy day, children retrieved not only their own balls but also those of their peers. Another group of children was intent on getting everyone to fall into line as instructed by the teacher. Children demonstrate that they care for others. For example, during a session on road safety, one child summoned the others to the safety of the pavement. By displaying such characteristics at such an early age these children show very good progress in personal development and citizenship.
14. The nursery takes attendance seriously, and gives the registration process a prominent place in its daily routines. At the given sign, children gather round the teacher and respond to their names as they are called out. Registers are taken

separately for each group at both morning and afternoon sessions and are collated in the office each day.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

15. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good features. This is an important factor in helping the children to learn effectively. Teaching is satisfactory in 56 per cent of lessons, good in 28 per cent and very good in 16 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The vast majority of teaching is undertaken by the three nursery nurses. The acting headteacher and the nursery nurses work well together. This strong teamwork plays an important role in helping the children to learn.
16. Sessions are carefully planned and there are good routines and systems in place to help the children feel secure and settled. All staff have a consistent approach to the children; expectations are clear and the children respond well to clear boundaries and frequent praise for their efforts and achievement.
17. Resources are used effectively to help children to learn. This is particularly the case in teaching knowledge and understanding of the world, where staff provide a good range of tools and equipment to encourage full understanding and awareness of technical details. In sessions where children played on the fire engine they wore uniforms and boots, used flashlights and hoses and were well informed how these things were used because they had seen the local fire-fighters demonstrating them. In the teaching about traffic lights good equipment supported the learning as children enjoyed exploring a road circuit, riding their wheeled vehicles towards crossings and junctions.
18. In many activities the staff explain and demonstrate what to do and this gives the children good ideas how they might extend the activities. In working in the sand tray the nursery nurses show how sand can be poured or moulded, raked or piled high. They help the children to get the best out of the activities and take an interest in each child. They usually support such activities with encouraging words and social discussion. They do not always expect the children to use new words in their talk. Through the support of staff pupils' concentration increases and their social confidence grows.
19. Throughout each session, time is used well. There is a good balance between work with the staff and activities which children choose for themselves. Children move confidently from one activity to another and staff are available to work with them individually or in small groups, observing what they can do and explaining or showing them how to improve. Children with special educational needs get a sound level of support and staff are sensitive to their needs and difficulties. These children benefit from the wide range of activities on offer and learn to understand nursery routines well.
20. The main strengths of the teaching are the staff's understanding of the needs of small children and the consistent approach to personal and social development. Every child responds well to this good provision, showing growing understanding of using the nursery routines and growing security and confidence in relating to the adults and moving around the teaching areas. Provision for helping children to understand their world is well thought through. Teachers provide good initial experiences, following these with carefully planned activities in school, for instance, using photographs for further discussion and writing or drawing activities to make a record of the learning. Physical and creative activities are well structured and supported well by good and very good intervention from the adults.

21. The main weaknesses in teaching are the area of spoken language and the numeracy provision. There is strong emphasis on listening and routines are especially developed to help children to listen to one another as well as to the staff. Social talk is provided for every day, but some children choose not to speak at these times. There are insufficient planned opportunities to help the children to learn to talk more confidently and clearly. In the area of numeracy the activities provided are interesting for the children, but they are not always well matched to what has gone on before, so do not lead to steady learning. Staff are diligent in observing children and noticing how they respond to the activities and to each other. These observations are not yet extended to the next stage of planning to help each child to go on learning at a steady rate. Higher attaining pupils are not specifically singled out. They benefit from the general support and provision, but no special teaching plans are made to further challenge these pupils.

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

22. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is broad and covers all areas of learning. There is particularly good provision to promote children's personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the wider world, their physical and creative skills. Skills in literacy and numeracy receive attention. Some aspects of literacy are successfully supported, such as listening, early reading and writing. There is a lack of structure to promote speaking and mathematical understanding, which leads to some weaknesses in provision. As a result, while younger children receive suitable provision, older or higher attaining children do not have planned regular experiences for further developing effective speaking or increasing their skills with numbers.
23. The school is in the early stages of developing curriculum policies and schemes of work. The new language and literacy policy is helpful and comprehensive about most areas of provision, but does not give enough attention to how children's spoken language will be developed. Planning in the medium-term is based on a range of topics that are largely appropriate, although some, such as 'Space', are potentially ambitious for young children. Planning shows clear learning objectives, many of which are well provided for, but the activities and experiences to support objectives are not always closely linked to ensure the desired learning.
24. There is good planning and provision for children's personal, social and health education. Good attention is paid to topics such as 'helping others' and 'keeping safe' and these are reinforced well through incidental teaching as well as focused sessions on aspects of personal and social development.
25. Good attention is paid to enable individuals and groups of children to experience all areas of the curriculum. Children who may have special educational needs are identified early and action plans have recently been put in place to target areas for development and to monitor progress on a regular basis. The school has recently been allocated some specific support for children who speak English as an additional language in order to further develop planning to meet their needs. The school is successful in many respects in meeting the needs of the children but makes no special provision to identify or challenge higher attaining children. All benefit from the good emphasis on personal and social development and the very good provision to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world.

26. Good links with the local community extend children's learning and enrich the curriculum. A recent visit from the fire brigade led to excellent provision for role-play as the children dressed as fire-fighters and acted out putting out a fire and talked about the rescue of a cat from a tree. Good arrangements are made for children's induction to the nursery. There are regular opportunities for parents and younger children to visit and participate in nursery activities and to be introduced to the nursery routine. Good information is passed on to the primary schools to which the children transfer.
27. Provision for children's personal development is very good overall. Children have good opportunities to learn about the world around them, to understand the needs of others and to appreciate the similarities and differences of a range of cultures.
28. Children's appreciation of the world is raised through activities such as growing bulbs, talking about the weather and watching the movement of water or sand as these are poured through sieves and funnels. Children have good opportunities to make and listen to music and to learn about how colours change as paint is mixed together. Some are fascinated by the computer and enjoy watching how images change as the mouse is manipulated.
29. Provision for children's social and moral development is carefully planned. A high degree of attention is paid to encouraging children to appreciate the needs of others and to learn to take turns and share. Activities such as milk and snack time are used well to encourage the day's 'special person' to distribute drinks and pieces of fruit. All children are expected to assist at 'tidy-up' time, working alongside the staff to put everything back in place. Children are encouraged and praised for using their initiative. Good behaviour is always noted and encouraged.
30. Children have very good opportunities to learn about a range of traditions and cultures. Celebration of festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year are used well to teach children about associated customs and, for example, to sample different foods and wear traditional dress. At the time of the inspection, some children were enjoying listening to Chinese music in a quiet area with a Chinese New Year greeting on display.

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

31. The school has developed good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the security and welfare of the whole school community. The strategy for personal, emotional and social development underpins all aspects of the curriculum and school life, and faithfully reflects the main aims which are displayed around the nursery. The school staff have good knowledge of the children and ensure very good quality of care.
32. The designated person for child protection is the headteacher. She is well experienced, has undergone the requisite training and ensured that her colleagues are suitably equipped to discharge their child protection responsibilities. While basing procedures on those of the local education authority, the school adopts a very positive approach by promoting in children an awareness of their own personal safety. The nominated first-aider has received appropriate training and is supported by others in the nursery who hold certificates of competence. Proper reporting procedures are in place.
33. The school follows the recommended policy for health and safety. A risk assessment of the premises has been conducted, and staff are aware of the need to report

hazards. Improved recording procedures have been agreed. Fire evacuation arrangements are satisfactory.

34. The school makes satisfactory provision for monitoring and promoting attendance and is developing an increasingly productive partnership with the Sure Start Project based in the same premises. Joint provision includes the Parent and Toddler group, which is currently staffed by Sure Start personnel.
35. The school has very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. The effectiveness of these procedures is seen in the consistency and firmness of their application by the whole staff team, resulting in the very good standard of behaviour.
36. The school has developed good procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development. In consequence the children develop a sense of personal responsibility and a spirit of initiative. The awards policy celebrates good work and effort by awarding a star, or being sent to the headteacher for extra praise. By being nominated in turn as a 'special child', children's self-esteem develops through a sense of achievement.
37. Procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress are satisfactory. The teacher and the nursery nurses take opportunities to observe children at work and note how well they are learning. The use of the information is unsatisfactory. This information has value towards planning the next stage of learning, but staff do not use it in this way. Because these observations are not used well, planning does not arrange to take each child's learning forward, so the school is not supporting children's academic progress as well as it could. This weakness is more evident in literacy, particularly speaking, and numeracy. In other areas of provision the breadth of the activities and the security of the intentions lead to better progress.

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

38. The positive views of parents about the school are reflected in their formal and informal comments to inspectors. Parents note that the children like coming to school, that they learn to be polite and make new friends, that they develop well and become more independent. They recognise and learn to write their names. They begin to read words and to speak better. Several parents noted that their children bring home reading books after each session. There were some mixed opinions about work at home and information given to parents about their children's progress. The school might consider ways of canvassing parental opinion in order to make the most appropriate provision in these areas.
39. The school maintains good links with parents through the frequent letters to them, the daily accessibility of the staff, the information on the notice board, and the parents' evenings. More formally, the school reports annually to parents through the governors' report, while the prospectus contains useful information on how parents can help their children at school and at home. Annual reports on individual children are of good quality, although they do not identify areas for further improvement, or provide the opportunity for parents to include their comments. Guidance about early learning is on display for parents' information at the school entrance. Photographs of children at work are also displayed, with additional information about the activities in English and Punjabi.
40. The involvement of parents has a positive impact on the work of the nursery, not only by helping to raise money for equipment and activities, but also through their informal

communications with members of staff as they call at the nursery. Parents remarked on how they valued the opportunity to discuss their children's progress with staff. Such exchanges begin when children attend the recently formed Smarties' Parent and Toddler Group, where the reassuring presence of a parent helps children to settle in more easily and enables staff to gain insights into children's needs at an early stage. The few parents who work as voluntary helpers at the nursery make a good contribution to its work by releasing staff to work more closely with smaller groups of children with specific needs. Parents contribute further to their children's learning by listening to them read at home as recommended in the prospectus.

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

41. The school was formed in May 2000. The teacher in charge of the existing nursery was promoted to acting headteacher of the new school. An appointment has recently been made for a permanent headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher was in charge. The provision through the local education authority of agreed support from a more experienced headteacher at a nearby nursery school provides good help and guidance during this interim period.
42. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The local education authority, as the appropriate authority, is guiding the school well and governors from the local primary school offer support. The acting headteacher has carried out her many responsibilities effectively and has made good efforts in establishing a management framework. In the brief time available a clear development plan has been prepared, some curriculum policies initiated, grant funding explored and some innovations established. There has been insufficient time to develop clear management systems, such as longer-term records of pupils' development and agreed assessment systems or the monitoring of teaching which can support longer term development.
43. The school benefits from a number of local initiatives. There is a close link with the Sure Start Project. The good relationships which are being developed with this service are leading to good support for the school. For example, the Parent and Toddler group is currently staffed by two members of staff from Sure Start. Their very good example helps parents to develop more ways to play with their children and help their learning. A further positive development is the school's new involvement with Wolverhampton's School Support Co-ordinator for pupils with English as an additional language. This is leading to clearer communication about education with parents from ethnic minority groups. There is a clear intention to develop the school in the model of Wolverhampton's Centres of Excellence and, although time has been insufficient to take this intention forward fully, the development plan and other recent innovations provide a clear and effective start.
44. The school has a good level of hard-working, caring and committed staff who work very well as a team. All staff carry out their duties and implement the new policies in a consistent and caring way. All know the pupils well and give them good guidance and encouragement in all their work.
45. Governors of the local primary school are asked by the local education authority to act as critical friends towards the nursery school. This link is currently strengthening through meetings and visits, and this group has oversight of the nursery school, but no direct responsibility by governors for school development is specified at this stage.



46. The nursery school funding is still in the hands of the local education authority, although some grants are being directed into the school. These newly available funds are being used well for resources and training for specified areas such as information technology.
47. The school development plan identifies areas for development which are appropriate for the school and will support its development. Some of the early action has already been evaluated and reviewed to judge its impact on the school so far. The general environment of the nursery is showing improvement, there is effective clerical support, staff are attending training for professional up-dating and new resources have been purchased. The policies which have been prepared are helpful. The specific needs of the children in this nursery have not been taken fully into account. For example, there are many children whose speech is very limited, so the language and communication policy will benefit from more detailed attention to how pupils will be supported in developing their speaking skills.
48. Accommodation is spacious both indoors and out and it is used well. The teaching spaces are well organised and specific curriculum areas have been identified in each one, so children are clear about the ongoing activities. Resources are very good and are used well to support the learning activities. The school fulfils the majority of its stated aims well, but could do more with regard to specific achievement in spoken language and the development of numeracy and use its assessment work to identify higher attaining children and offer them more challenge.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

49. The headteacher and staff, with the assistance of the local education authority should:

- Raise children's attainment in speaking and numeracy by:
  - giving more attention to planning for these areas
  - targeting children's needs more carefully
  - putting a structure in place for progression in skills and understanding
  - tracking children's progress in these areas
  - raising expectations of what children might achieve.

*(Paragraphs: 1, 3, 4, 8, 18, 21, 50, 52, 53, 54)*

- Improve assessment systems by:
  - systematically monitoring children's progress in all areas of learning
  - using the information to support planning for extended learning.

*(Paragraphs: 21, 25, 37)*

- Introduce management systems which use information in supporting school development over the longer term.

*(Paragraphs: 25, 27, 42)*

### **Minor points for improvement**

- Develop the language and literacy policy to include more specific attention to the development of children's ability to speak effectively.

*(Paragraphs: 23 ,47)*

- Consult with parents about the most effective way to provide suitable activities at home and which aspects of their children's progress they wish to have reported to them.

*(Paragraphs 38, 39)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18%	29%	53%	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### 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)	50
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	-

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	-

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## **Teachers and classes**

### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	103.75

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.2
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	146,992
Total expenditure	141736
Expenditure per pupil	-
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	5,186

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	50
Number of questionnaires returned	16

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	19	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	63	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	13	25	0	50
The teaching is good.	56	44	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	19	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	31	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	44	6	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	56	31	0	0	13
The school is well led and managed.	56	38	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	19	0	0	44

## **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**

50. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is below average. They have had little experience of different kinds of play, especially with other children. They are at immature stages in their personal, social and emotional development. The spoken language development of many of the children is well behind what could be expected. The starting points for personal development are well understood in the school and form the basis of some of the curriculum priorities. The need for spoken language development is recognised, and talk is always encouraged, but development in speaking is not fully supported by carefully planned activities. During their time in the nursery they make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in some areas.

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

51. All children, including those with special educational needs make good progress in their personal and social development and most are in line to meet expectations in this aspect by the time they are five years old. They quickly learn the nursery routines and organisation, and begin to feel confident in moving around or joining in with play activities. They grow in confidence with all of the adults, and they help with clearing-up and putting equipment away. When given an opportunity to select their own activity, they do so with a clear idea of what they will do, sometimes showing very good levels of enthusiasm. With guidance, they become independent in their personal hygiene. They learn to be part of a smaller or larger group, and grow in understanding of the need to take turns, say thank you and give help when asked. Many routines are especially designed to help personal and social development. For example, each day a 'special child' is chosen to give out the drinks and take a book bag home. This helps children to understand that at times they should listen and wait and at other times they can be in charge. Even with a great deal of help, many do not participate in social talk effectively, either because they are too immature or because their spoken language skills are too limited. Older children help younger ones and all make progress socially. Children learn to treat the nursery, the people and the resources with respect. This provision is a strength of the school.

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

52. By the time they are five, attainment for the majority of children is approaching the expected level for listening, reading and writing. Attainment in speaking is below expectations. All children enjoy a rich language input from the staff, who always explain things clearly or give reasons why things are done in a certain way. Staff ask children questions and answer the few questions that arise. They provide a clear vocabulary and give information about the work. Children learn to listen carefully and the majority maintain interest through most sessions. Older children can recall and explain parts of a story, but many younger ones are unable to do so, even a short time after hearing it. Too few opportunities are made for children to develop descriptive language, and there is too little use by children of the many new words in the nursery environment to stimulate ongoing interest in speaking. Stories are used frequently, and there is a good supply of attractive picture books, which some children enjoy, but younger children have little experience of books and have to be guided by staff to use them with care. With help, children develop confidence in handling books. Writing opportunities are linked to other experiences, such as the Chinese New Year celebrations, when

children were helped to write invitations. Children are encouraged to understand why writing is useful and this aspect of language and literacy shows satisfactory progress. Some children are beginning to distinguish letters and words from pictures and drawing. Most can recognise their name and some are developing understanding of initial letters and their sounds. In speaking, children are unlikely to meet expectations at five years of age. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in language and literacy because of the consistent concerns of staff to help them to communicate.

53. Progress for the majority of children is satisfactory in language and literacy except for speaking, which shows unsatisfactory progress. Many children continue to speak in single words or use gestures to get attention, and only a few start conversations without encouragement from an adult. Most will not be speaking effectively to deal with the full range of communication needs to expected levels at the age of five. Children enjoy learning the words of songs, anticipating a repeated line. Progress in reading is satisfactory. Story sessions encourage children to become familiar with books. Younger children use books as toys, to pick up and reject very quickly, with no attention to the order of the pages or even the content at times. Most older children show successful learning, they hold the book the right way up, look at the pages in the right order and know the difference between text and pictures. Higher attaining children do not receive sufficient challenge and structure to support extended learning to appropriate levels. There are many helpful activities for supporting development in early reading. Children's stages of understanding are not always assessed well enough to help the teachers to provide accurate planning. Children use pencils and crayons, trace or write letters, and have an early but growing understanding that writing is widely used. In one session they saw Chinese writing as well as English. Children are in line to meet most of the expectations in these aspects of language and literacy.

### **Mathematical development**

54. Children's attainment in mathematics is not secure and many will not meet expectations by the age of five years. Progress is unsatisfactory. Activities provided help children to put things in the right order, match and count, but not systematically enough to ensure effective development for all children, especially older and higher attaining children. Activities give attention to big and small numbers. Ongoing counting work linked to some aspects of number recognition is helpful, but the opportunities provided are insufficient. Children develop awareness of shape through creative work and sand play, when they use different shapes of paper or a variety of three-dimensional containers. They know how many children are allowed at one activity and some can recognise the numeral which states their age. Some good opportunities, such as the ones at registration time when children check the numbers in the groups, ensure that counting is repeated and begins to make sense, but groups are small and therefore this activity has limitations for those children who have already developed counting skills. When working on the computer children undertake matching and counting activities. The recognition of numbers is supported by the collection of a range of numbers in a special book.

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

55. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is fully in line to meet expectations by the age of five years. Very good provision supports a wide range of learning needs. Children's progress is good, including that of children with special educational needs. Children know about the work done by people in the wider world, such as fire-fighters and bus drivers. Children understand some of the things that

people do because they are taken out to see what is happening and they have visitors who explain and demonstrate their work. They learn that people enjoy celebrations and special events. They know that the fire engine has special equipment such as the flashlights and the hoses. They understand that protective clothing is important. When the bus gets cleaned they know that this involves jets of water and lather. They understand that traffic lights are to keep people safe and make the cars stop and start in a certain order. They know that the crossing and the warden are there to help people walk across the road. When testing paper boats to see if they will float they notice that some soak up a lot of water and sink very quickly. When using the computer they use the mouse and the keyboard, understanding that clicking and moving the mouse will move the arrow and tapping a key repeatedly will give a repeated letter on the screen. Their skills in using technical equipment are developing. They can use earphones and tape recorders to listen to songs, and they understand how to change the coloured lights in the bubble cylinder. They know that the small robot can be told how many paces to move by pressing its buttons. In a lesson seen, several children were captivated by the movements of the 'Roamer' robot and one boy in particular spent a lengthy time trying to predict its movements and trying to stay just in front of it – an activity that created great interest and hilarity. This provision is well supported by discussion with staff and use of photographs to help children to remember their experiences.

### **Physical development**

56. Children show good confidence when using wheeled vehicles and steering them around circuits. They can use their feet or the brakes to stop and start at will. When climbing on blocks and beams they show confidence in balancing and moving in a number of ways. When playing with balls they show increasing control and growing ability to co-ordinate their bodies in moving around the playing area. The school's good provision supports this area of development well. Staff give good attention to children during physical work and this has the effect of increasing children's confidence. Children who have had a few terms in the nursery are skilled in using and controlling physical effort. Those children who start off with low confidence are nurtured to the point where they can join in with the other children. Children use construction materials with some success; hold pencils and paint brushes well enough to make marks; press, push or mould the sand or the play-dough, use glue and spreaders and complete jig-saws. Their progress is satisfactory, including the children with special educational needs and the majority will meet expectations fully by the time they are five.

### **Creative development**

57. Children's attainment in creative work is in line to meet expectations at five years of age. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Children select paint colours and mix new ones to create patches of colour. They explore the patterns and shapes of tracks made in paint by various wheeled vehicles. They use glue and can arrange and stick pictures effectively. Their cutting skills are developing and most children show good application when they try to use scissors. When making music together they learn the names of some of the instruments and rattle them to the rhythm of a well-known song. With help they can respond to a signal to stop and start. When singing a simple tune they remember some of the words and keep together as a group. Older children sing and play at the same time and younger children try hard when attempting this combination. They make pictures and designs on the computer screen and print them out for the wall display.