

INSPECTION REPORT

MAPLES NURSERY SCHOOL

Acton, London

LEA area: Borough of Ealing

Unique reference number: 101858

Headteacher: Ms S Vizard

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Curtis
20893

Dates of inspection: 13 – 14 May 2002

Inspection number: 230889

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	East Churchfield Road Acton London
Postcode:	W3 7LL
Telephone number:	020 8743 7128
Fax number:	020 8749 1656
Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Ealing
Name of chair of governors:	Kate Crawford
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20893	Mr D J Curtis	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Special educational needs.	How high are standards? (The school's results and achievements). How well are children taught?
17315	Mr D Holroyd	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards? (Attitudes, behaviour, relationships, personal development and attendance). How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
12764	Mrs W Thomas	<i>Team inspector</i>	Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
20063	Mr G Slamon	<i>Team inspector</i>	English as an additional language.	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	8
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	9
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	11
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	12
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	13
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Maples Nursery School is situated in Acton within the London Borough of Ealing. Thirty-six boys and 20 girls attend on a part-time morning or afternoon basis, with nine boys and 13 girls attending full time. Thirty per cent of children come from private homes, with the remainder from rented/local authority supported housing. Twenty children come from different cultures and there are three children who are designated as 'refugees'. Nineteen languages are spoken in the school. Thirty-one children have English as an additional language, of whom 20 receive specialist additional funding for their learning. There are five children on the school's register of special educational needs, although no child has a statement of special educational need. There are no national or local education authority tests to measure children's standards when they start Nursery school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school of which parents are justifiably proud. Children make very good progress in all areas of learning; they are happy, secure and confident in the school. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, play a full part in the day-to-day life of the school and make this an inclusive school. Teaching is very good, with teachers and Nursery nurses providing children with a rich and stimulating range of learning opportunities. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers and Nursery nurses work most effectively as a team and share the vision of making this school a centre of excellence. The school gives very good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Children make very good progress in their learning and are on course to meet or exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.
- Children's attitudes to school and behaviour are very good. Relationships with each other and adults are good.
- Teaching is very good and makes a significant contribution to children's progress.
- The leadership and management of the school are excellent.
- Parents are supportive of and value the high quality of education provided for their children.
- The provision for and teaching of children with English as an additional language and those having special educational needs are very good.
- A stimulating range of visits and visitors to support children's learning enriches the curriculum.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The school should continue to work on the targets set within its school improvement plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in May 1998. Since then, there has been a complete turnover of teachers and Nursery nurses. The school has made very good progress and all the key issues have been addressed successfully. Curriculum planning now meets the needs of older and more able children. Boys and girls now make the same very good progress. Assessment procedures, and the results of assessments, are used effectively to plan children's future work. Attendance and punctuality have improved. The monitoring and evaluation roles of the Nursery staff, governing body and local education authority have been clarified and are effective. The quality of teaching has improved significantly.

STANDARDS

As the result of very good teaching, children make very good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they start Year 1 in their primary schools, they are on course to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in their personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. They are on course to exceed the expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical development, physical development and creative development.

Children enter the Nursery very happily and greet their teachers and Nursery nurses with a cheery 'hello'. The only crying comes from their younger brothers and sisters who want to stay and experience the stimulating range of activities on offer.

Children enjoy looking at books and talking about pictures. They know that books are read from left to right. Older and more able children know their alphabet and their letter sounds. Children listen attentively and they enjoy initiating conversations with adults. Many of the older and more able children write their names unaided.

Children read, write and order numbers to ten, with older and more able children confident with higher numbers. Children recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes, and are accurate in sorting shapes by size and colour.

Children have a good understanding of the life cycles of butterflies and frogs. They show good skills in using the computer, particularly the use of the mouse to 'click and drag'. Many older and more able children are confident in selecting the program they wish to use by clicking on the menu.

The rich and stimulating outdoor area and garden allows children to make very good progress in their physical development. They are confident jumpers and climbers, and they enjoy playing with balls, including hitting balls over a net.

Children enjoy the many opportunities for role-play, for example in the 'baby clinic'. They sing tunefully and enjoy performing actions to go with familiar rhymes. Children experiment enthusiastically with paints and other artistic media, including collage and model making.

Children with special educational needs and English as an additional language make very good progress in their learning as the result of high-quality support from teachers and Nursery nurses.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, children show positive attitudes to school and lessons. They are very enthusiastic and enjoy talking to visitors. During the inspection, children spent much time showing inspectors the frogs and caterpillar cocoons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, children behave well in lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes and when moving around the school. Any disagreements are quickly resolved by teachers and Nursery nurses.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between children, and between children and adults, are good. Children are polite and friendly. Boys and girls, including children from the many ethnic backgrounds represented in the school, play happily together.
Attendance	Good, the headteacher and staff encourage parents to bring their children to school on time.

Children are happy, secure and very confident in school, and this has a significant impact on the very good progress they make in their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	Very Good

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

Teaching is very good; it makes a significant contribution to the good progress children make in their learning. Teachers and Nursery nurses plan an exciting and stimulating range of activities for children.

Significant strengths of the very good teaching are teachers' management of children and the excellent use of time, support staff and resources to promote children's learning. Very effective use is made of all areas within the Nursery, especially the outdoor area/garden. Teachers manage children exceptionally well, and any disagreements and arguments are dealt with quickly and sensitively, leaving children feeling that they have been treated fairly.

Teaching of the key skills of communication, language and literacy is very good. As a result, children make very good progress in the development of key early reading and writing skills. Children make very good progress in their mathematical development because of very effective teaching of key numeracy skills, particularly in reading and counting numbers.

Teaching of children with special educational needs is very good; they are supported effectively by teachers and Nursery nurses. Teaching of children with English as an additional language is very good; they receive effective support from the specialist teacher, for example in taking them on walks within the neighbourhood to develop their knowledge and understanding of the locality.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good; the curriculum meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum and is planned carefully to address the 'stepping stones' children are expected to cover during their time in the Nursery.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Individual education plans are good and consistently implemented by all teachers and Nursery nurses.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The school uses most effectively the specialist support teacher to assess and support children in their learning. Parents are fully involved and encouraged for example to translate children's names into their home language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. This makes a positive contribution to children's very positive attitudes and very good behaviour.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides effective day-to-day care for its children and for their health and safety. Procedures for assessment and the use of assessment are very good.

Parents are very supportive of the school and work effectively to support the headteacher, teachers and Nursery nurses. The take-up of games from the maths games library is very high and contributes to children's very good progress in their mathematical development. Parents appreciate the very good teaching and are particularly impressed with how well teachers and Nursery nurses know their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school. She receives very effective support from the deputy headteacher, teachers and Nursery nurses in leading and managing the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are hard working and supportive. They have a more detailed understanding of their roles and responsibilities than at the time of the previous inspection.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is very aware of its many strengths, and through its school improvement plan has identified areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. This includes additional specialist funding for children with English as an additional language.

The accommodation is very good for the children in the school. Staffing and resources are very good, and support most effectively children's learning. The significant strength of leadership and management is the headteacher's vision for the school to be a centre of excellence. The school applies successfully the principles of best value in its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teaching is good.• Their children are making good progress.• The school is well led and managed.• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.• Their children get the right amount of work to do at home.	

Forty-two parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector and 53 questionnaires were returned. Inspection findings support the very positive views of parents expressed through the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting, that this is a very good school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There are no national or local education authority (LEA) tests to measure children's standards when they start Nursery school. However, the school has devised its own entry profile of children's abilities on which planning for children's learning is based. As the result of very effective teaching, children make very good progress in their learning during their time in the Nursery. By the time they transfer to Reception Classes in primary school, they are on course to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals¹ at the end of their Reception Year. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical development, creative development and physical development, the children are on course to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

2. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development. They enjoy school and are happy, secure and confident. At the start of sessions, they settle quickly to activities, and they enjoy greeting their teachers and Nursery nurses. Children are confident in working independently, often showing long periods of concentration on one activity. On other occasions, they work and play happily in small groups.

3. Progress in communication, language and literacy is very good. Children enjoy listening to stories and are keen to ask questions. Many initiate readily conversations with adults. They enjoy looking at books and most know that books are read from left to right. Older children know their letter sounds, with more able children reading confidently key words and phrases. Children enjoy 'writing' activities, and older children are confident in writing their names unaided.

4. In their mathematical development, children make very good progress. Most recognise and read numbers to ten, with more able children counting accurately to 20 and beyond. They enjoy looking for numbers in the wider world, for example bus route numbers. Children sort accurately by size and shape, with more able children recognising and naming common two-dimensional shapes.

5. Children make exceptional progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They have a very detailed knowledge of the life cycles of frogs and butterflies through the rich experience of first-hand observation. Their interest, fascination and knowledge of living things are excellent. Skills in the use of computers are particularly strong, especially in the ability to use the 'menu' to select and/or change the programs they use. They are very confident in the use of the mouse and keyboard.

6. Progress in creative development is very good. Children enjoy using a wide range of media and materials to create an impressive range of pictures and collage work. They enjoy role-play activities, including those planned by teachers and Nursery nurses, and those they devise themselves. Children enjoy singing and the many opportunities to experiment with music making.

¹ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are 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.

7. In their physical development, children make very good progress. In their outdoor play, they are agile and confident in climbing and jumping. They balance successfully when walking along a beam and they enjoy swinging on the ropes and rope ladders. Physical skills in using their hands for cutting, pasting and sewing are very good.

8. Children with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress. They have detailed individual education plans (IEPs), with clear, realistic and achievable targets. Teachers and Nursery nurses know and understand the children's needs and provide a stimulating range of activities to ensure that they play a full part in the life of the Nursery. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when the progress of children with SEN was judged to be 'satisfactory'.

9. Parents recognise and appreciate the high quality of teaching in the school and the positive impact it has on the very good progress their children are making.

10. The school has addressed successfully the key issue from the previous inspection report when older and more able children were judged to be underachieving in 'some aspects of early reading and writing skills'.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.

11. Children's attitudes, values and personal development are good overall. This is an improvement from the last inspection report, which found them to be satisfactory and frequently good. Through the example given by their parents, children display positive attitudes towards the Nursery. A particular strength of the Nursery is that children respect the values and beliefs of each other, as was demonstrated in an end-of-day story time when a range of songs chosen by children were enthusiastically sung by the group.

12. During activities, and when around the Nursery, children are energetic and keen. They behave very well, have consideration for each other and have very good relations with adults. A good example of this was seen in the application and very good behaviour of a small group working hard whilst undertaking a range of sewing tasks. There are no incidents of oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, sexism or racism. At the parents meeting, the inclusiveness in areas such as the use of bilingual books was seen as a particularly good feature.

13. No children have been excluded. Attendance is now good. A random audit during the inspection showed an 88 per cent attendance, which fitted well with figures of 83 per cent for the month of March, when there had been a chickenpox outbreak. This is an improvement since the last report, and demonstrates that the measures for reinforcing the importance of attendance through the home-school agreement and newsletters have been successful.

14. Children settle quickly on arrival and clearly enjoy attending. Parents have been successful in their efforts to ensure they arrive punctually. Parents say that their children enjoy coming to the Nursery, as the 97 per cent positive response to the questionnaire showed. This is undoubtedly the case.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The previous inspection report judged the quality of teaching to be 'mainly satisfactory'. Thirty-three per cent of lessons were judged to be good, with five per cent very good. Eight per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Issues arising from unsatisfactory teaching were linked to more able children not being challenged sufficiently, and to children's progress in writing not being fast enough.

16. Current inspection findings judge that the quality of teaching is very good and that it has a significant impact on the very good progress children make in their learning. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, and the issues around unsatisfactory teaching have been addressed fully. During the inspection, just over half of the teaching was judged to be very good or excellent, with the remaining teaching good.

17. Inspection findings support the very positive views of parents in relation to the quality of teaching. Analysis of the questionnaires shows that 100 per cent of parents agree or strongly agree that teaching in the school is good. This was reflected at the parents' meeting, where many positive comments were made about the quality of teaching. In particular, parents feel that the teachers and Nursery nurses really know their children, and are appreciative of the planning and day-to-day assessment of their children's work.

18. The teaching of children with special educational needs is very good and contributes positively to the very good progress children make. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be 'mainly good'. Teachers and Nursery nurses identify at an early stage, through effective links with parents, children who have special educational needs (SEN). Once identified, individual education plans (IEPs) are written, with detailed and achievable targets; these are shared with all teachers and Nursery nurses. The activities planned for children ensure that they are included fully in all of the activities.

19. Teaching of the key skills of early reading, writing and number is very good. Children are provided with a good range of books, which are attractively displayed. Older and more able children are taught the letters of the alphabet and letter sounds. During story time, teachers and Nursery nurses promote an interest and love of books through the exciting way in which stories are read. Such reading immediately captures the interest and imagination of the children and they become absorbed and 'spellbound'. Children are encouraged to take books home regularly. Children are given many opportunities to 'write', for example in the 'garage' role-play to 'write out job orders'. In number, the use of a library of mathematical games which children take home is having a very positive impact on their knowledge and understanding of number, shape, space and measures.

20. Teachers and Nursery nurses know the children exceptionally well, and relationships are very good. Children's behaviour is managed successfully and with a firm but calm approach. For example, during a 'bathing the baby' role-play session, two children 'squabbled' over a sponge. The teacher very calmly removed it and said, 'When you can learn to share you can have it back'. Similarly, when a child decided to 'fire' the water in a shampoo bottle at a child opposite, the teacher calmly took the bottle and demonstrated what he should be doing. She quietly and effectively, showed how 'shampoo' should be applied to the 'baby's hair'. As a result, the children involved were quickly absorbed in the activity and taking part in their learning.

21. Teachers and Nursery nurses plan effectively together and give the children a rich and stimulating range of activities both indoors and outdoors. Resources are used effectively, including the use of parents as helpers. For example, during the inspection the children's role-play was based on a 'baby clinic', and parents came in with their babies, including twins so that the children could observe and discuss what a nine-month-old can do. This activity made a strong contribution to children's understanding of how they have changed since they were babies. Children are given many opportunities to use computers, including for example, using a program to sequence correctly a series of eight pictures of the life cycle of a butterfly. This program reinforces their knowledge and understanding of living things and, in addition, contributes to the development of key reading skills.

22. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of children's learning is good, and this is recognised and valued by parents. During activities, teachers and Nursery nurses are very aware of children and the activities they follow. For example, a teacher was very aware that one child spent much of a morning working on mathematical shapes, particularly in arranging shapes that fitted into each other. This was noted and recorded. Similarly, notes were made of a child who wanted to make the number '207' and brought the teacher the correct digits '2', '0' and '7' from a number chart. In this way, teachers and Nursery nurses assess effectively children's learning and use this information successfully to take children forward in their learning.

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

23. The school provides a rich and vibrant curriculum. Children are provided with a very good range of learning opportunities which cover the six areas of learning recommended for children of this age. The school views children's knowledge, skills and attitudes as tools for learning and seeks to provide opportunities for children to explore, talk and play through real-life experiences. A strong feature of the school's provision is the emphasis on independent learning. Children are encouraged to explore a wide range of activities. They do this with enthusiasm, learning to make choices and developing good levels of concentration.

24. The layout of the classrooms and the outside learning area offer an inviting range of activities. These are organised to give children real choice and develop their thinking skills, through working and playing alone or in groups of different sizes.

25. The outdoor area provides a stimulating range of equipment to promote children's physical development. Children are able to climb, swing and balance on suitable equipment. There is space for wheeled toys and the children enjoy travelling round the one-way system, usually respecting the no-entry sign on the track. They develop their knowledge and understanding of growing things by planting seeds and caring for growing plants. They enjoyed showing photographs of the pumpkin they had grown and talked about making and eating pumpkin soup.

26. The school pays good attention to children's differing needs. In all the activities provided, staff are concerned to develop children's vocabulary. Good provision for social development creates many opportunities for children to interact with each other. There are many opportunities for children to write, draw and count in a variety of situations, both indoors and out. The learning environment is very well organised and helps children to become independent learners. They select their materials in the design and technology area to make different models. They are confident in using the computer to play games. Staff make regular observations of children and encourage them to take part in all activities. They note children's preferences and ensure that over time, children engage in activities that develop

their progress in all the areas of learning. The school has addressed fully the issue of planning for older and more-able children.

27. Parents are seen as vital partners in learning. The curriculum booklet, which is well illustrated with digital photographs, clearly explains how each area of the Nursery is organised. The activities are well illustrated and the learning content clearly explained. Parents were very involved in developing the garden area. They were involved in helping children write their own baby books, illustrated with photographs. During the inspection, some parents also brought in their babies, contributing to the topic of growth and change. The curriculum is further enriched by visits to places of interest. Children talked with enjoyment of their visit to the Science Museum and proudly showed their photographs to visitors. They had also visited a local garage and the post office, and regularly go out in small groups to explore the locality. The school regularly welcomes visitors to work with the children. The local health visitor has recently visited to talk about her work at the baby clinic, and the chair of governors, a botanical artist, has worked with children to produce some very attractive paintings.

28. The school works well with the infant schools to which children transfer. Staff meet parents to discuss their choice of infant school, and liaise with schools to ensure that parents have the information they need. The co-ordinators from the school visit the Nursery to meet the children before they transfer and discuss any particular needs. Children visit their primary schools before transfer. The Nursery welcomes students from Institutes of Higher Education, both teachers and Nursery nurses. There are also regular placements of high school students on work experience.

29. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, and makes a very significant contribution to their positive attitudes and very good behaviour. Teachers and Nursery nurses provide many good opportunities for children to experience the awe and wonder of the natural world. Through the study of the life cycles of butterflies and frogs, and opportunities to watch plants grow from seeds, children are provided with rich experiences of the natural world around them.

30. Children are taught right from wrong. Expectations are high in the Nursery that children should behave sensibly and respect adults and each other. Children are expected to take responsibility for themselves and, for example, to join in the clearing-up sessions at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

31. Children are given many good opportunities to work together in pairs and groups, and this contributes successfully to their very good social development. Throughout the day, children are encouraged to work and play with each other; this includes boys with girls, and children from the wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds in the school.

32. Through visits to local places of interest, including the Science Museum, children are given very good opportunities to develop their cultural awareness. The school uses parents especially well to promote children's multi-cultural awareness, for example through translating their names into Russian, Polish or Arabic. The school provides a good range of dual-language books, which further develops children's multi-cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The Nursery cares very well for all its children and provides first-class support, welfare and guidance for them. This is a major strength of the Nursery which is very much appreciated and valued by parents. Parents at the parents' meeting emphasised that the Nursery had a high level of concern for children, and was caring when they had difficulties.

34. Staff know all the children very well and there are very good systems in place to monitor children's academic progress and personal development. These include the daily review meetings and an excellent range of relationships with parents and others working with children in the Nursery.

35. The Nursery promotes positive discipline and focuses attention on expectations of both parents and children. These are set out in both the prospectus and home- school agreement. The Nursery uses very clear behavioural strategies and plans, and ensures the excellent behavioural policy is well implemented and effective. Staff readily share experiences and successes with parents and children and this helps to build and sustain the very good practice in this area.

36. The day-to-day pastoral care of children is centred on the key workers² and how they can work to provide a very good level of care, support and guidance. Children get on well with both their teachers and key workers. They know they are people to trust with problems and concerns. All staff respond very well to their role as key workers and are seen regularly talking to children about different matters at all times of the school day. Excellent examples of their work in this role were seen in the operation of story times and during outside activity sessions.

37. Effective child protection measures are in place. Staff are aware of these, and of the need to bring matters of concern to the headteacher. Training for all staff on latest developments in child protection is imminent, having been postponed due to trainer illness.

38. The Nursery pays good attention to the health, safety and welfare of its children. The routine monitoring of health and safety by the local education authority (LEA) staff, assisted by senior staff, is very good. It ensures the maintenance of a high level of health and safety vigilance. There is very good fire safety and first aid provision.

39. Any incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The Nursery monitors incidents of inappropriate or oppressive behaviour, and excellent practices to prevent recurrence were noted. These included arranging a session to promote multicultural music, following inappropriate remarks by a child to others. The result is seen in a lively and orderly Nursery, where hard work and appropriate behaviour are the usual run of things.

40. The excellent Nursery provision is complemented by on-site extended day care facilities. The breakfast and after school clubs are used well and are valued by parents. They add a true community focus to the care and welfare provided by the Nursery.

41. The school has developed successfully its procedures for assessing children's progress since the last inspection. All key workers are given a day each week to work on focused activities with their group and to make observations of the children. This is in addition to the ongoing observations made by all staff. In addition to completing the local

² Each child in the Nursery is attached to a specific teacher or Nursery nurse and these are known in the school and to parents as key workers.

education authority (LEA) profile for children, the school completes a 'Record of Achievement' for each child. These records include samples of children's work. Key workers annotate them, and illustrate them with photographs. The records are sent to the child's primary school and then returned to parents. A strength of the school's approach to assessment is the reviewing of the 'Records of Achievement' with individual children. This ensures that children know what their targets are and helps them understand how much they have learned. Children greatly enjoy these sessions and are proud of their progress.

42. Targets are set for individual children and the key workers, on a regular basis, monitor these. This helps the school to move the children forward to the next stage of development. These targets are also used by staff to plan appropriate activities. Staff meet regularly in two teams to review children's progress and share information. The teams meet regularly with the assessment co-ordinator. She monitors the children's 'Records of Achievement' and gives helpful feedback to colleagues. This enables them to share good practice, and ensures a consistent approach to assessment through the school. The staff know the children very well. Their assessment observations are closely linked to children's targets, and they use the information successfully to guide their planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The ways in which the Nursery works in partnership with parents is very good and is a strength of the school.

44. At the last inspection, there were found to be excellent systems in place to keep parents informed about their children's progress, very effective communication between the Nursery and parents and good links with the local community. Parents gave support to children at home and are made welcome in the Nursery. These features are still very evident and in some aspects they have improved. There is a very strong partnership with parents, they are welcomed into the Nursery and they receive very high-quality information about what is happening and the progress of their children. There are also excellent examples of working together for the benefit of the Nursery, including 'The Parent Garden Development Group'.

45. Communication with parents is of a high standard, with good, clear and easily understood information. This includes information through home visits before children's admission. These take place in the vast majority of cases, and are well regarded and seen as valuable by parents. There is detailed curriculum information on a special board in the Nursery, a very good prospectus/handbook, a frequently published and high-quality newsletter as well as well-regarded reports and end-of-year progress and target information. This is all provided on a regular basis, and parents greatly value and welcome this information.

46. There is no formal parents or friends association. Nevertheless, key members of the governing body and groups of parents play a valuable role by organising social and fundraising events. Parents are very supportive of the Nursery. Attendance at contact and review meetings is high, and parents welcome the useful and up-to-date information which is given to them at these events. The annual written report for parents about their children's progress is clear and informative. It gives clear targets for future educational and personal development.

47. Homework has been defined and recognised in a number of ways, which parents value. They are encouraged and coached in how to support their children's learning at home. This they do to good effect. Parents help in the Nursery on a regular basis. They

are well managed and add richness to the education provided. This partnership enables many of the community and external events, such as visits to the Science Museum and local places of educational or cultural interest, to happen and provide benefit to children attending the Nursery.

48. Parents talk very positively of the Nursery's approachability. In the survey of parents, 98 per cent felt able to approach the Nursery, and all at the meeting felt the headteacher was readily available and very good at communicating important information to parents. This supportive and welcoming atmosphere was very noticeable during the inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The school is exceptionally well led and managed. The headteacher provides an excellent lead for the school's work and has been responsible for the very good improvements made since the last inspection. She has a clear view of the school's many strengths and areas for development. Her strong commitment to equal opportunities and educational inclusion underpins the school's aims and ethos. The headteacher is highly regarded by staff, governors, parents and the children in her care. All admire her success in creating a climate in which children are made to feel secure and valued. She is conscientiously supported by her deputy headteacher and all members of staff in ensuring that the school's aims and values are reflected in their work. All members of staff are dedicated and hardworking, and share a strong sense of purpose and commitment to the children at the school. A very strong feature of the leadership is the work the school does with parents so that they are fully involved in their children's learning. Fine examples of the school's concern for its families include the provision of curriculum workshops, lending libraries for parents and children and availability of information on helping children at home.

50. The deputy headteacher, team leaders and co-ordinators undertake their delegated responsibilities effectively to provide a good lead to staff teams. Their roles are clearly defined and they, together with the headteacher, are guiding the school forward with energy and unity of purpose. Members of staff also fulfil the role of key workers, and are dedicated to the children they monitor and support. Parents speak very highly of this very good provision.

51. The leadership and management of the provision for children with English as an additional language (EAL), and for those with special educational needs (SEN), are excellent. The co-ordinators are very experienced, and carry out their responsibilities with purpose and dedication. The school is highly regarded for the quality of its provision for these children. As a result of the outstanding leadership, all members of staff are aware of children's specific needs and have the necessary strategies to provide effective support.

52. The school monitors, evaluates and develops teaching and learning very well. The headteacher and local education authority (LEA) advisors observe lessons and carefully discuss performance with individual teachers. Any overall strengths and areas for development are shared with staff. Individual areas for development become part of a teacher's personal development objectives, which are set through well-planned performance management meetings. Every opportunity is given to assist teachers to reach their objectives through discussions, observation and training. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved very significantly since the last inspection, and is now very good.

53. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and, through positive links established by the headteacher and the very supportive chair of governors, has a good understanding of the strengths of the school, and areas for development. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school and in monitoring its effectiveness is being developed through well-

planned visits and links to curriculum areas. Governors have LEA training to further strengthen this important role. Governing body meetings are very well attended, and governors are kept well informed through detailed headteacher reports. Governors carry out appraisal of the headteacher and set clear objectives which, to date, have been achieved.

54. There is a comprehensive improvement plan which is based on a thorough audit of the school's current position. It is a thoughtfully constructed document which is guiding development and is securing significant improvements, as for example, in the outdoor learning area and in the teaching of information and communication technology. Although the school does not have a delegated budget at its disposal, it makes very efficient use of funds available for the education of the children. All grants and donations are used effectively for their designated purpose. For example, the very efficient use of funds available for children with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is having a very positive impact on their learning. Continual review of the improvement plan ensures that the school remains on track to meet its targets and that priorities are still relevant to its changing needs. The finance officer is well trained and efficient in the performance of her duties. Day-to-day administration is very good; it is unobtrusive and effectively serves the needs of staff, children, parents and visitors to the school.

55. The school is well staffed with teachers and Nursery nurses with the qualifications, experience and expertise to match the demands of the curriculum and of children with special educational needs or English as an additional language (EAL). All members of the teaching staff work competently with the groups they are responsible for. There are very good procedures for the induction of newly qualified staff and experienced staff new to the school. There are also very good procedures for informing and supporting students on teaching practice in the school. The school's potential for training new teachers is excellent.

56. Although the indoor accommodation is somewhat limited, it is very efficiently used. Members of staff organise it with care and attention to provide a stimulating, safe and attractive learning environment for the children. The outdoor accommodation is an excellent facility and is very well used to develop children's social skills and independence. Through the joint efforts of staff and parents, there has been significant improvement in the outdoor facilities since the previous inspection. The school is very grateful to parents for the donations and hard work which made this possible. This is just one of the very fine examples of how well the school works with its parents for the well-being of the children.

57. The school is well resourced, with high quality, imaginative resources to support teaching and learning. Staff make excellent use of visits into the local area and further afield, such as to the Science Museum, to stimulate children's interest and to enhance their experiences.

58. The school gives very good value for money. This judgement takes into account children's personal circumstances and prior attainment, the very high quality of education provided, children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development, improvement since the last inspection and the outcomes in terms of standards achieved. The funds allocated by the LEA to the school are not significantly different to those allocated to all Nursery schools.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The school needs to meet the targets set within its school improvement plan, including the key leadership and management areas for improvement which are to:

- prepare for the full delegation of the school's budget;
- to extend the monitoring and evaluation role of the governing body;
- to achieve 'Investors in People' status.

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

60. Almost 45 per cent of children in the school come from homes where English is an additional language (EAL). Twenty early language learners are targeted for intensive specialist support under the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.

61. The teaching and the high quality specialist support these children receive ensure that they make very good progress in language development. Teachers and Nursery nurses are aware of the children's needs and of the different languages spoken in their homes. As a result, they focus well on children's different requirements, ensuring that the learning of children with EAL is equal to that of all other children of similar abilities. The co-ordinator and the Ethnic Minority Achievement teacher give very good advice to members of the teaching staff and attend planning meetings to ensure that the needs of all children are met. Very good assessment procedures allow teachers to plan tasks appropriate to the needs of all children. As a result of the excellent provision, and the high quality teaching, children with EAL achieve as well as others, and attain standards expected for their age when they leave the Nursery.

62. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion for all children. The high-quality support provided ensures that children with EAL are fully included in all aspects of school life and have full and equal access to the curriculum. Parents as well as children are fully included in school life. Curriculum workshops, lending schemes such as the mathematics library, home visits and opportunities to accompany children on group visits ensure that parents of children EAL are fully involved in their children's education. A very strong feature of the school is that the importance of parents as educators is acknowledged, and a partnership, based on shared understanding, mutual respect and discussion, is developed.

63. The management of Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant provision is excellent, and funds are used very efficiently to support children's learning. There is a true and strong commitment to this area of the school's work. Different languages spoken by members of staff are used well to support children and parents. Children's own languages and cultures are celebrated and appreciated. The very good example set by all members of staff, and the outstanding relationships they establish with their children, result in children respecting each other's differences. Children are being well trained to play a full part in today's multicultural society. The school is justifiably proud of the quality of its provision for teaching EAL.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	8	9	0	0	0	0
Percentage	11	42	47	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	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	31

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	N/A
National comparative data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	N/A
National comparative data	N/A

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Average class size	N/A

Education support staff:

Nursery

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	263,312.00
Total expenditure	319,495.00
Expenditure per pupil	* ³
Balance brought forward from previous year	*
Balance carried forward to next year	*

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

³ The school does not have a delegated budget and some important items, such as staffing costs are not included in the school's basic budget. This accounts for the variation between income and expenditure.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

78
53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	17	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	26	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	20	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	44	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	27	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	41	0	3	8
The school works closely with parents.	80	18	0	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	79	21	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	73	24	3	0	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

64. As a result of very effective teaching, children make very good progress and are on course to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave reception classes in their primary schools. Children come into school at the start of sessions happy and excited. The only tears and crying are from younger brothers and sisters who want to stay and not go home with their parents. Children enjoy greeting their teachers and Nursery nurses. They are friendly, polite and, with visitors, naturally inquisitive. For example during the inspection an inspector was asked. 'Who are you? What are you doing here? My name is And this is my friend who is'. During the inspection, they led inspectors by the hand to see the frogs in the fish tank and the butterfly cocoons which had been caterpillars during the previous week. They spoke knowledgeably and excitedly about the changes they had observed.

65. Relationships are good. Children play happily together both indoors and outdoors. For example, a group of boys were role-playing a group of builders building a wall with the large construction blocks. At one point the following conversation took place. 'Are you getting some more (bricks)?' 'Yes! Now I have loads'. 'We need to put some more in front so it (the wall) doesn't collapse'. Equally, children enjoy activities on their own where they work independently and with good concentration, particularly when using the computer.

66. Children enjoy social times, particularly children who attend full time when they eat their packed lunches together. Milk and fruit time is a good social occasion and shows that children are aware of expectations within the school. For example a boy who turned his milk straw into a 'gun' was firmly put in his place by a girl who told him, 'You cannot do that, guns are not allowed in our school'.

67. Teaching is very good. Teachers and Nursery nurses place a strong emphasis on children's personal and social development. Many opportunities are provided for them to work and play together. In addition, children are frequently taken for walks, for example to a local garage where they practise their social skills in talking to the garage owner. There is a strong expectation in the Nursery that children should co-operate and learn to take turns. In the computer area, they are encouraged to 'sign up' for their turn. Teachers provide children with good opportunities to meet adults, particularly the many parents who come into school to help.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children make very good progress in this area of learning and are on course to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1 in primary school. More able children are on course to exceed expectations. Teaching is very good and makes a strong contribution to the development of these key skills. Teachers and Nursery nurses provide children with many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, from the many informal conversations they have to more structured question and answer sessions. Children greet visitors confidently and readily start conversations, for example,

'Hello, would you like to come and see our frogs, there are seven, can you see the one sitting on the rock?' Teachers develop speaking and listening skills through effective questions and answers, for example through encouraging children to talk about how snails move and what it feels like to have a snail walk across your hand.

69. Children enjoy writing, and teachers provide good opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills. Many older and more able children write their names unaided, for example when they 'sign up' to use the computer. A number of children find out and write the names of other children in the Nursery who have the same initial as themselves. Children enjoy 'writing' for different purposes, including 'booking appointments in the baby clinic' or 'booking cars in for a service in the garage'. Older children make good attempts at writing words, and show a good understanding of writing the initial letter(s) of words. Children's multi-cultural awareness is developed successfully by parents who come into the school and write the children's names in Russian, Korean and Arabic.

70. Children enjoy looking at books in the reading area, and know that books are read from left to right. Often, they look at books in pairs, and talk enthusiastically about the pictures. One boy confidently pointed out to an inspector, when looking at a book, 'That says 'Be gentle' it's written in big letters'. In story sessions, children show great enjoyment in listening to stories read with interest and enthusiasm by teachers and Nursery nurses. Older and more-able children make good progress in recognising the letters of the alphabet and letter sounds. Through good teaching, they read, from the book 'The time it took Tom', key words and phrases, such as 'Got it!', 'Yes!' and 'Oh! No!' Children are encouraged to talk about the front cover of books and to predict what might happen next in a story. They are taught successfully key reading skills.

Mathematical development

71. Progress in this area of learning is very good, and children are on course to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is very good, and provides children with many opportunities to develop key skills in numeracy and their wider mathematical development. Most children read, write and order numbers to 10. Older and more able children recognise and read bigger numbers, including the route numbers on buses; for example, one boy knows the number '207'. When completing an alphabet jigsaw, teachers encourage the children to count the number of letters in the alphabet, and older children count accurately to 26. When throwing beanbags into a bucket, children count accurately the number that hit the target. A number of older and more able children know, for example, that 'four and four is eight'.

72. Through well-planned opportunities by teachers and Nursery nurses, children develop a good understanding of shape, space and measures. Older and more able children recognise and name correctly common two-dimensional shapes, including square, circle, rectangle and triangle. In the 'baby clinic' they measure and record their own height, and they are encouraged to measure the length of 'babies' using tape measures and to record their weight by using scales. Children are confident in sorting shapes by colour and size and have a good understanding of 'taller than', 'shorter than', 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Children make very good progress in this area of learning, and are on course to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is very effective and children are provided with a rich and varied range of learning opportunities. There is a strong emphasis on the use of visits and visitors. In the week prior to the inspection, children visited the Science Museum. During the inspection, children went on a walk to a nearby garage, to interview the owner as part of preparing for their role-play back in school. In addition, parents brought babies in for children to observe in their 'baby clinic'. Other parents came in to make posters with photographs and word-processed accounts of how their children had developed from babies. Such activities contributed strongly to children's understanding of how they have changed over time.

74. Children's scientific knowledge is developed successfully and they have a very good understanding of life cycles of frogs and butterflies. Children enjoy the garden, and planting seeds and watching plants grow. In the garden, they recognise and point out insects with great enthusiasm, exclaiming, for example, "That's a greenfly!" They talk confidently about how caterpillars pupate and they await with great excitement the emergence of the painted-lady butterflies from their cocoons. When using the computer, they sequence accurately sets of four or eight pictures showing the life cycle of frogs and butterflies. Children develop a good understanding of shadows and light through the very effective use of an overhead projector. Children's shadow pictures are then scanned into the computer, and printed for them.

75. Children are very confident in using computers. They know how to use the mouse to 'select' and to 'click and drag', with older and more able children showing good keyboard skills. Many children are confident in changing programs by going into the 'menu' and selecting the program they want to use. They understand how to load a CD-ROM and how to handle the discs correctly. Children make good progress in their word-processing skills, with many writing their names correctly. The school makes very effective use of a digital camera to record children's progress and activities. For example, within minutes of returning from a visit to a local garage, the children saw the photographs taken on the trip.

76. Children develop good geographical awareness of their locality through local walks and visits. They recognise different types of homes and through well-planned use of a computer program, children use 'click and drag' skills to make their own towns. They dictate to teachers and Nursery nurses captions to be added; for example, 'I like my city. I like the lights. There are houses and buildings and roads and cars. I like the football bit'.

77. Children enjoy making models, including models of insects. They show good skills in cutting and joining. During the inspection, one child made a good model of a raft from 'lollipop' sticks and rubber bands to sail in the school 'canal' (a channel in the playground which is filled with water). She entrusted an inspector with it once it had floated down the canal, saying, 'Will you look after this please until I go home'.

Physical development

78. Progress in this area of learning is very good and children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals. Teachers and Nursery nurses provide good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, particularly through very effective use of the exciting and stimulating outdoor play area and garden. Children are confident in climbing on and jumping off the climbing frame, and they enjoy swinging on the rope ladders. With limited adult help, they walk across the beams and show good balance. They show good skills for their age in

hitting a ball over a net with a bat, and in throwing beanbags into a bucket. They are confident in riding tricycles and in pulling trucks around the garden, with shouts of, 'I am the brickie, hurry up with those bricks for the wall'. However, they do not always follow the one-way system!

79. Children show good skills in using their hands. They are confident in using scissors to cut shapes and materials. They use glue and other joining materials particularly well when making models. Children, through effective support from a parent, develop good skills in sewing.

Creative development

80. Children make very good progress in this area of learning, and are on course to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Teachers and Nursery nurses plan an exciting range of learning opportunities for children. There is a strong emphasis on role-play. For example, during the inspection the role-play area was set up as a 'baby clinic', and a student on teaching practice supported children most effectively. Children had good opportunities to be 'doctors', 'nurses' and 'receptionists', and to measure, weigh and change 'babies'. In addition, great fun was had when the 'babies' had to be washed in the 'bath'.

81. Children make good progress in developing their creative skills in using paint and other materials. During the inspection, children enjoyed, and were often totally absorbed in, an activity in which they made shades of green by mixing colours. They were provided with an imaginative range of fruits and vegetables to act as a stimulus. Children paint imaginative watercolours of lilies in the style of Monet and receive good support in their learning from the chair of governors who is a botanical artist. They create interesting collages in which they represent the shapes and colours of fruits.

82. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes, and performing the accompanying actions, for example in 'Hickory, dickory, dock'. Their multi-cultural awareness is developed successfully when they sing 'Frere Jacques' in English, French and Polish. Teachers and Nursery nurses encourage children to participate fully and to reinforce their counting skills through clapping. Children sing tunefully and show a good sense of rhythm.