

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ARLESDENE NURSERY SCHOOL**

Cheshunt, Herts

LEA area: Hertfordshire County Council

Unique reference number: 117066

Headteacher: Ann Gately

Reporting Inspector: Diana Songer-Hudgell  
21686

Dates of Inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 242747

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:	Blindmans Lane Cheshunt Waltham Cross Herts
Postcode:	EN8 9DW
Telephone number:	01992 626879
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Appropriate authority:	Hertfordshire County Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Janet Mayes
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21686	Diana Songer-Hudgell	<i>Registered Inspector</i>	Communication, Language and Literacy. Physical Development. Creative Development. English as an Additional Language. Equal Opportunities.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What the school should do to improve further?
5986	Terri Boohan	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Mathematical Development. Knowledge and understanding of the World. Special Educational Needs.	How well is the school led and managed? How good are the curricular opportunities?
09974	Dalgit Singh	<i>Lay Inspector</i>		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Arlesdene Nursery School is situated in the town of Cheshunt, Hertfordshire. There are 73 boys and girls on roll who are admitted in either September or January, usually at age three and a half. The majority of the children come from privately owned housing in the local area. They attend part-time for either a morning or an afternoon session. Five percent of the children come from homes where they speak English as an additional language. This number has risen since the last inspection but is below the national average. The number of children with special educational needs fluctuates termly and is currently five percent, the majority of which have speech or language difficulties. There are no children with statements of special educational needs.

Children's standards of attainment on entry are average in all areas of learning, except physical development where it is above average. The children are taught in a large open plan area, with teachers and other nursery staff having equal responsibility within the staff team as 'key workers' for a group of children.

Since the last inspection, there has been a complete change of staff, some of whom have only been in place since September. There is currently a non-teaching acting headteacher pending the arrival of a new permanent headteacher who will join the school at the start of the summer term.

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

Arlesdene is a good school that is effective in helping children to achieve high standards. The acting headteacher provides good leadership and management of the school. The hard working and effective staff team skilfully supports children well, helping them to feel happy and secure. The quality of teaching is good and the children enjoy school and work hard as a result. The cost per pupil is high and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Children achieve good standards and make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- The staff manage the children very well and have very good relationships with them.
- The quality of teaching is good and strong staff teamwork very effectively promotes children's learning and welfare.
- Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very well monitored and promoted.
- The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and social development are taught very well.
- Children's interest, concentration and independence are very good and very well promoted by the staff.
- There are very good levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The implementation of the policy for the appraisal and performance management of staff.
- The governing body's role in monitoring the progress and standards of the school and determining its strategic direction.
- Longer-term strategies and planning to ensure the school sustains and further improves its current good standards and quality.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in 1997. All the weaknesses identified at that time have been soundly remedied, despite much temporary staffing and mobility and the lack of a permanent headteacher. Good assessment procedures are now consistently in place to ensure that children's attainment and rates of progress are thoroughly monitored, and the information is used well to plan for the next steps in their learning. The quality of teaching is well monitored and all the staff have clear job descriptions to define their responsibilities. There is good planning to ensure children cover a balanced curriculum and build on their existing skills, knowledge and understanding. Strong teamwork and a shared sense of purpose support all the school's work. This means that the school is well placed to improve further in the future.

## STANDARDS

Children achieve very good standards in their personal, social and emotional development and good standards in all other areas of learning. They make good progress in all areas of learning. They are on target to exceed the expected early learning goals at the end of the foundation stage in physical and creative development. The majority of children are on target to attain the early learning goals in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. Additionally, some are expected to exceed the expected level, particularly in numeracy and speaking and listening skills.

The few children with special educational needs make good progress in achieving the targets identified in their individual education plans. The small number of children who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress and achieve good standards in all areas of learning.

Children have good literacy and numeracy skills for their age. They use their speaking and listening skills to good effect across all areas of the curriculum. In physical development, children have good fine movement and balancing skills. They use their imagination well in their creative development. They sustain concentration very well for long periods and co-operate very well with each other. Their attainment in personal, social and emotional development reflects the very good relationships evident between children and adults throughout the nursery.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are very enthusiastic, happy and settle very quickly in their activities.
Behaviour	Very good. Children clearly respect each other, their teachers and the learning resources and environment. They behave very well both indoors and outdoors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children quickly become independent and show considerable initiative in their personal development. Relationships throughout the nursery are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has appropriate procedures to monitor attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall in all areas of learning, and very good in almost one in five lessons. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the curriculum for the age range they teach. Each is responsible for a group of children, though all staff contribute equally to the teaching. As a team, they plan well for the lessons, and are well organised and effective. They know the children well and have a clear understanding of their needs. Staff are consistent in collecting thorough information about the children's attainment and progress, and use it effectively to plan the next steps for individuals and groups. They maintain high expectations for all children.

The staff are particularly effective in promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development and enabling them to use basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and technology across all areas of learning. Groups and individuals are managed very well, with a good balance between staff-directed activities and those chosen and planned by children themselves. The organisation of groups, for some parts of the week, into older and younger ages is particularly effective in promoting good standards. This challenges the children and builds well on their existing knowledge and understanding.

Planned activities are interesting, stimulating and clearly explained. This means that children are interested in their work, concentrate for long periods and show good levels of independence. Members of staff manage the children's behaviour very well by kind patience and quiet firmness. They have very good relationships with the children and constantly praise and encourage them to try new things and gain confidence. Staff are particularly effective at involving individuals in the work of others and stimulating children's curiosity to see what is going on around them. The staff ask particularly good quality questions to encourage children to think about and discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings. They model good language for the children to hear and use when extending their vocabulary. Children are skilfully supported at their level of need, which enables all to make good progress.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is interesting and well balanced. It is planned carefully to ensure it is relevant to the needs of the children.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. All children are given support, whatever their need, to access and benefit from the well-planned curriculum.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. The very few children who are at an early stage of learning English receive good support. Their needs are well met and they make good progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Children are given very good opportunities to develop their personal, moral and social skills. They are encouraged to share and work well together. Staff expect high standards of behaviour, attitudes and manners.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good. Staff give children very good personal support and guidance and monitor their progress very effectively.

The school has very good links with parents. It values these links and they have a positive effect on children's learning.

There is very good provision for children's personal, social and health education. The staff have very effective strategies to promote literacy and numeracy within the curriculum. Behaviour is well monitored. Children are given reasons for what is expected of them and understand the implications of their actions on others.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher has provided stability and built a new team of staff who are committed professionals with a clear understanding of the work of the school. This is based on a strong commitment to further improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities and is taking an increasingly more active, though not yet fully developed role, in shaping the direction for the school and establishing the implications of best value principles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, teaching and learning is effective. The policy for appraisal and the performance management of staff has yet to be implemented.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all very good. The nursery receives additional funding to support the current additional staffing. Costs per are pupil high as a result.

The nursery is very well staffed. All staff are appropriately qualified and have clear roles and responsibilities. The accommodation, layout and learning resources have all improved and are very good overall. The nursery provides a safe, very clean and attractive learning environment that supports children well in their learning.

There is currently a clear direction and effective leadership from the acting headteacher. She has provided stability by forming a largely new staff into a strong team. They work well together to promote the aims and values of the school and secure good provision for the benefit of the children. Equality of opportunity forms an integral part of the policies and practice of the nursery and is promoted effectively. The nursery is inclusive of the needs of all its children, and good procedures are in place to support children with special educational needs and those who are more able.

Newly established procedures are enabling the governing body to develop more fully its understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It is taking a satisfactory and increasingly more active role in shaping the direction of the school, although this role is not yet fully developed.

There is a sound plan in place to support the current work of the school. Priorities and targets for improvement are wisely selected and progress is regularly revised. However, the current school development plan does not include sufficient significant strategies to ensure that the school sustains its current standards and quality in the longer term. This is partly because the school is awaiting the new headteacher and wanting to give her the opportunity to develop the vision and shape the future direction for the work of the school.

The school is generously resourced financially, and funding per child has risen significantly since the last inspection. More recently, additional funding has been used to increase the support staff during the absence of a permanent headteacher. The governing body is appropriately involved in financial planning. However, whilst ensuring that competitive quotes are sought for large items of spending, it is at the early stages of examining and analysing the implications of the principles of "best value" in relation to spending decisions. The high level of funding and very generous staffing are sensibly directed to secure the good quality learning environment, good teaching and good learning outcomes for children.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nursery promotes pupils' confidence well.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children's needs are well met.</li> <li>• The children are well cared for.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• The staff are approachable and friendly.</li> <li>• Children enjoy coming to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearer information about the work children do each week.</li> <li>• More information about what they should do during the induction visit.</li> </ul>

Parents are very supportive of the school. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school. The nursery plans are clearly displayed on the wall of the nursery by the entrance. However, because of the individual nature of the learning experiences the children receive, it would be difficult for the staff to display a plan for every child. The school has clear intentions to review its induction procedures now that there is a new staff team.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection, children's standards of attainment on entry to the nursery were average in all areas of learning. Inspection findings show that attainment on entry remains average in all areas except physical development, which is now above average. Teacher assessments made when the children first start the nursery confirm these findings.

2. Children achieve very good standards in their personal, social and emotional development, and good standards in all other areas of learning. They make good progress in all their work. The majority are on target to exceed the early learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage in their physical and creative development. The majority of children are on target to attain the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. Additionally, a number are expected to exceed the expected levels, particularly in numeracy and in speaking and listening skills.

3. The few children who have special educational needs make good progress towards the specific targets identified in their individual education plans. A very small number of children with English as an additional language who are at an early stage of language acquisition make good progress and achieve good standards comparable to other children in all areas of learning. Higher attaining children are individually well supported and make good progress.

4. Standards of attainment have been maintained well since the last inspection. The introduction of targeted support in phonics and the focus on numeracy skills at the start of small group teaching time has improved the progress that children make in language and mathematics. Progress was judged to be sound at the previous inspection and it is now good.

5. Standards of literacy are good. Children use their speaking and listening skills well across all areas of the curriculum. They follow instructions well, listen consistently to each other, and enjoy answering the staff's questions to explain what they are planning, thinking and feeling.

6. Books are handled carefully. They recognise characters by the picture clues and know that stories have a sequence. Older and higher attaining children identify known letters and some words. Children make marks on paper confidently. The majority understood that when letters are put together they make words, and some are successful in forming individual letters and writing their names. Children have very good, positive attitudes to their literacy work.

7. Standards of numeracy are good. Children enjoy using their developing numeracy skills in songs, rhymes and stories, particularly at the start of the small group time and in the post office role-play area to count stamps. Most are beginning to use counting in their games, and some higher attaining children count, recognise and spot errors when using numbers to ten.

8. In physical development, children show good standards in their fine manipulative skills, such as cutting wool, paper and thin card and spreading glue carefully over a specific area. They show good balancing skills and confidently increase their speed when completing a circuit. Children rarely bump into anything when riding wheeled toys. They can vary their pace and stop on a given spot with good control. They show considerable enthusiasm for their physical activities.

9. In the area of knowledge and understanding of the world, children enjoy examining the features of living things. They notice and talk about patterns and changes in the colours of their paintings, the outside weather and their lives at home and school. They concentrate well on the computer and show good control of the mouse when using a program about 'Postman Pat' and his life.

10. In their creative development, children use their imagination well to build complex routes and circuits for their toys through sand. They can mix two colours to achieve a required shade and show careful control in their brush strokes. The majority sing well and are happy to perform to an audience. They show interest in each other's work and co-operate together for long periods.

11. The very good relationships that are evident between children and adults are a strong feature of children's very good attainment in their personal, emotional and social development. Children play and learn well together and are confident and secure to try new ideas.

12. The staff set good quality individual targets for all children and make regular assessments to check that they are achieving them. This ensures that all children are given challenging work, make good progress and achieve good standards throughout all areas of the curriculum. This includes children with special needs, English as an additional language and the higher attaining.

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

13. Children's attitudes, their behaviour and relationships with each other, staff and visitors are very effective, constructive and purposeful. The social environment for learning is always warm, friendly, harmonious, and very conducive to children's personal, social and emotional development. Children are enthusiastic and keen to come to school.

14. Most children consistently approach their tasks with enthusiasm and excitement, and gain immense enjoyment from everything they try. They listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to answer questions. Their spirit of enquiry helps children to become motivated and confident learners. Children are eager to please and exhibit their work with pride. At story time and during registration, they readily engage in discussion and their inquisitive nature helps them to develop speaking and listening skills. These opportunities enable children to speak confidently about what is happening in the story and to express their views. This experience helps them to raise their self-esteem and grow in confidence. Very good teaching offers effective opportunities for independent learning, which children take and use confidently and maturely. Throughout the day, children are invited to undertake various tasks, such as clearing up and recording their own progress on a chart. They exercise their responsibilities with confidence and a growing degree of pride. Occasionally, a very few children, including those with English as an additional language, lack confidence due to their under-developed skills in speaking English. These children are helped to succeed by the gentle intervention of the bi-lingual teacher. The children increasingly learn to share and appreciate the efforts of others.

15. Behaviour is very good in teaching and learning sessions and around the school. Most children clearly understand the school's code of conduct and the concept of right and wrong. They respect each other and their teachers. They always approach adults with respect and a warm and friendly manner. Some children have a willingness to speak about themselves, their parents and aspects of activities in the home and school. In the outdoor play area, there are no signs of bullying or other types of inappropriate behaviour. Children increasingly share toys and take turns to use the larger play equipment. Children use their playtime effectively to learn, explore their environment and ensure they interact in a cohesive and purposeful manner. Sanctions are rarely used and teachers rely on children's self-discipline to ensure that their behaviour is consistently of a high standard. There have been no exclusions and the total absence of racist attitudes and behaviour highlights this. The school community learns in a harmonious and stimulating environment.

16. Relationships between children and with all adults are constructive, warm and caring. All children and staff enjoy the challenge of positive interaction with visitors. There are effective friendships within and outside gender and race groups. All staff members promote and develop children's learning, and support their personal, emotional and social development very well. They use these positive relationships effectively to increase trust and understanding. The staff consistently encourage learning in mixed gender and racial groups. This method of teaching helps to discourage sexist and racist attitudes and behaviour. All staff value their working relationships with each other, sharing responsibilities for the multi-racial community that they serve. These positive examples of good practice are an integral part of children's development. This environment creates an ethos of mutual respect and understanding.

17. Children are given good opportunities to help and support each other, and they enjoy assisting their teachers in parts of lessons. For example, during a painting and poster-making lesson, children eagerly shared painting tasks when helping to paint a post box. Children help to tidy up at the end of the lesson quickly, efficiently and responsibly. These opportunities enable children to become responsible citizens of the school community.

18. The levels of attendance are satisfactory. The school investigates all absences and makes serious attempts to discourage parents from taking their children on holiday during term time. It regularly reminds parents of their responsibility to encourage children to attend punctually.

19. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained its high expectations of behaviour, and this continues to support the very effective promotion of attitudes and values that was noted in the previous inspection.

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

20. The quality of teaching is good overall in all areas of learning, and very good in almost one in five lessons. This is an improvement and considerable achievement since the last inspection, particularly with the extended period of staff mobility and a complete change of staff. Currently, many staff are new to their roles, with an acting headteacher replacing the permanent headteacher who has been appointed from next term. This has had little negative impact on the quality of teaching, and they are a strong, committed staff team with good personal standards for their teaching.

21. At the time of the last inspection, there was a small number of unsatisfactory lessons. Not all staff had high expectations or understanding of the children's work in all areas of learning. This is no longer the case. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, and all staff have high expectations and a good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the curriculum for this age range.

22. Teachers and nursery nurses make an equally effective contribution to teaching. Each member of staff is responsible as a key worker for a group of children. Staff work together as a well organised and effective team. They plan well for the lessons and are each responsible for the good resourcing and organisation of two daily focussed activities. All the staff know the children well and have a clear understanding of their needs. They consistently use the thorough information they collect about the children's attainment and progress to plan effectively the next steps for both groups and individual children. This means that the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and social development are taught very well and this is a strength of the school. Their clear understanding of what each child needs to learn next enables staff to adjust their teaching accordingly and maintain high expectations for all children.

23. Groups and individuals are managed very well and a good balance is maintained between staff directed activities and children planning and following their own choices. The organisation of groups for some parts of the week in older and younger ages, for example for phonic work, is particularly effective in promoting good standards. The work challenges the children and builds well on their existing knowledge and understanding. Parents are justifiably pleased with the quality of teaching.

24. The planned activities are interesting, stimulating and explained clearly to the children. This means that they are interested in their work, concentrate for long periods and show good levels of independence.

25. Members of staff manage children's behaviour very well through kind patience and quiet firmness. They have very good relationships with the children, and constantly praise and encourage them to try new things and gain confidence. Staff are particularly effective at involving individuals in the work of others, stimulating children's curiosity to see what is going on around them. They constantly promote good personal and social skills in all of the children's work and encourage them to think about the consequences of their actions. Parents see fast progress in their children's personal development and are happy that the nursery promotes good attitudes and values and makes 'nice little people'.

26. Staff ask particularly good quality questions to encourage children to think about and discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings. They model good language for children to hear and use when extending their vocabulary. The staff are skilful in supporting each child at the level of their need, be they gifted or talented, or with special needs or not yet able to speak English. For example, they proficiently use a signing language in addition to spoken English to reinforce language for those not able to hear. This attention to every child's needs enables all to make good progress.

27. Children's learning is well supported by good use of a wide range of good quality educational resources. Time is used well, with no minutes wasted in unnecessary administration or organisation. During the lunchtime, the staff clean the nursery to a high standard and all resources are refreshed for the afternoon class. This ensures that children enter an attractive environment with good quality, well-resourced activities of the same consistently high standard as those enjoyed by the morning class.

28. Homework is used well to promote children's love of books and to stimulate ideas and further resources they can bring into the nursery. Teachers' plans are clear and displayed on the wall of the nursery. Nevertheless, a small minority of parents stated that they are not always sure what it is planned for children on a weekly basis, even though they are given information about the topic themes. However, because of the individual nature of the learning experience it would be difficult to display a plan in advance for every child.

29. At the time of the last inspection, there was not enough constructive and consistent assessment of children's work. There were also no systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure consistency across the groups. These weaknesses have been remedied and there are now good assessment systems, which are used well and consistently by all staff to support children's learning and progress. The acting headteacher effectively monitors the quality of teaching and standards the children achieve. Her feedback to the staff and their commitment to continuous improvement ensured the good quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection.

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

30. The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided by the school are good. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum lacked balance. There was no overall curriculum framework and appropriate time was not allocated to each area of learning to support children's progress. Curriculum provision has since been significantly improved. The curriculum is now broad, balanced and well planned across all six areas of learning to ensure that all children make good progress.

31. Good systems and procedures are in place to ensure that all staff plan together for a good range of stimulating learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors. The school has made good progress in establishing the new Foundation Stage curriculum in all six areas of learning. Provision is regularly reviewed and evaluated so that the curriculum is continually improved. For example, the school has identified the need to increase children's opportunities to investigate and explore more widely and is actively promoting more this through indoor and outdoor activities.

32. The learning purposes of the overall curriculum and of each activity are carefully considered and include very effective ways to promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Themes are used well to engage children's interest and support links between activities. For example a 'post office' theme was very well planned to promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and to support the use of information technology, across all six areas of learning. The theme excited children's interest and supported the development of knowledge, understanding and skills in each area of learning.

33. Children have a good range of purposeful staff led and 'free choice' activities. Children's own choices are carefully monitored and guided to ensure that each child has a good range of experiences across the curriculum. Sessions are of an appropriate length, and good routines ensure that children feel secure and confident to take part in the activities.

34. Exciting and challenging activities are planned for outdoor learning with the same thoughtfulness and thoroughness as for those provided indoors, and appropriate time is devoted to the outdoor curriculum. Physical development is particularly well fostered with both girls and boys having equal access to and interest in activities such as climbing, riding bicycles and learning to balance.

35. The curriculum begins each morning and afternoon with a very well structured session of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The routines for the 'small group' learning time are very well established. Children's individual levels of development and needs are very well supported through carefully planned, enjoyable experiences, and through the use of stimulating resources and skilful questioning. All staff are very skilful in promoting literacy and numeracy development both formally and informally in a wide range of situations both indoors and outdoors. Children have very good and enjoyable daily experiences of learning letters, their sounds, hearing stories, songs and rhymes, writing, counting and learning about numbers, size, shape and space. Regular opportunities, well supported by staff and some parental help, are provided for children to enjoy using the computers and gain ICT skills.

36. Children with English as an additional language are fully integrated into activities and make good progress across the curriculum. Children's special educational needs are well met. Additional literacy and numeracy challenges and extensions are provided for particularly able pupils. Children visibly grow in their confidence and enjoyment of these activities.

37. The school's special needs policy is comprehensive. Children's abilities and needs are thoroughly assessed on entry. Both those with special educational needs and more able children are identified early and specific provision is made within the curriculum to meet their needs. The individual education plans of pupils with special needs are well written, detailed and well targeted. The requirements of the special needs Code of Practice are fully met. The school is already very inclusive and preparing well for incoming changes to requirement.

38. There is very good provision for the development of children's personal, social and health education through all aspects of school life. From the time they enter the nursery children are required to use their initiative, for example, to make alternative choices if a group is too big. They are expected to explain what they have chosen and learnt as a result of their choices. This encourages them to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour and to be thoughtful of others in this process. As a result, the children quickly become independent and record their choices by placing their names on photographs of their chosen activity. This system also helps children very well to sequence and structure their time. As part of the promotion of health and hygiene in all the aspects of the curriculum, children know, for example, when to wash their hands and that some foods make for healthy eating.

39. Overall, the school's provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has further improved since the last inspection. The provision for spiritual development is good. Children are encouraged to think about the world around them and to talk about and value important events in their lives, such as birthdays and other celebrations. They are encouraged to observe and be curious and take pleasure in new experiences. They have good opportunities to share important experiences and talk about them with the staff and other children. These activities all help children to develop an understanding of the spiritual qualities of their lives, the world in which they live and their own place within it.

40. Children's moral development is very good. Children are successfully taught the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour so that they develop a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Staff act as very good role models for the children. Their own politeness, thoughtfulness and willingness to listen and respect all members of the school community have a positive impact on the children. They teach worthwhile values and remind children to apply them. The school is a very happy, harmonious community.



41. There is very good provision for children's social development. There are appropriately high expectations that children will be independent from the moment that they arrive at school, for example by finding their own pegs, taking off and hanging up their coats and joining their own home group. Very good systems, procedures and opportunities are in place to support their independence and the development of social skills. For example, children are expected to take the initiative in identifying and planning their own 'free choice' activities, within a clear structure and with appropriate guidance, where necessary, to ensure a balance of experiences. Most children, including new arrivals, quickly learn these routines, manage their activity board, sustain activities well and move between activities indoors and out purposefully and confidently. They engage very well in social events such as fruit and drink time, imaginative play and group times in which they recall events in their work and lives.

42. The school's daily routines ensure that children are very well prepared for the transition to the next stage of their education. The school maintains good relationships and links with playgroups and the schools the children will go to on leaving the nursery. Worthwhile visits are made within the locality and representatives of the community are invited to share their expertise and experiences with the children. Students from local community colleges are regularly supported in their training course placements in the nursery.

43. Children have good opportunities to learn about other cultures through a mix of planned experiences and incidental learning. Staff encourage children to share their own experiences and talk with them about different cultures and beliefs. Children have opportunities to celebrate different festivals and to understand the diversity of the world in which they live. The school has recognised the need to increase its multicultural resources, and recent purchases have enhanced the range of books, images and opportunities provided to support understanding and cultural diversity. Special occasions in the nursery for children and their families and visits out of school encourage them to appreciate their community and the wider world.

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

44. There are good systems and arrangements for child protection, ensuring a high quality of care and the well being of the school community.

45. Very effective procedures are in place for the monitoring and support of children's personal development. As at the time of the last inspection, children continue to receive very good quality educational support and guidance. Staff listen to the pupils and value them as individuals. Supervision at all times is very effective and all concerns are quickly dealt with. Teachers help children to celebrate their achievements and value all their contributions, both inside and outside of the classroom. The personal and social health education programme also contributes to children's social, emotional and physical development and helps them to make informed choices about healthy living. These arrangements raise children's self esteem and provide them with the confidence to learn and reinforce relationships that help pupils to grow personally and socially.

46. The school has satisfactory systems in place to record, monitor and investigate children's absences and to improve existing levels of attendance. Attendance information is communicated effectively between the staff and parents. The staff have secured the consistent support of the large majority of parents, which enables the school to achieve its satisfactory levels of attendance.

47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Children's behaviour is systematically monitored, recorded and rewarded very effectively. This ensures consistently high standards of very good behaviour, supports relationships and creates a warm and friendly atmosphere for learning which helps to raise standards.

48. There are good procedures in place to discourage, investigate, record and monitor all types of anti-social behaviour, including bullying. Parents are pleased with the manner in which any incidents of anti-social behaviour are handled. The school has a strong commitment to equal opportunities. Currently, there are only a few children from ethnic minorities. Procedures are fully in place to ensure that any incidents of racism are recorded, monitored and reported appropriately.

49. The school's procedure for monitoring and supporting children's academic progress is good. Detailed assessments are made when each child first starts school: these are informed by observations in all the key areas of learning and incorporate valuable information from parents and carers. This baseline profile for each child is used well by staff to plan for the child's experiences in the six areas of learning. It also informs early identification of any special needs that require additional internal or external support, and to identify higher attaining children. Individual education plans for children with special needs indicate thorough assessment, appropriate targets and good support.

50. Children's daily activities and progress are well monitored and assessed to ensure that they receive a broad and balanced curriculum and that both academic and personal progress are recorded. Staff know the children well and have a good understanding of their relative progress and needs. Good informal and formal opportunities are in place for parents and carers to discuss children's progress. At well-conducted formal meetings, a clear written report is shared and appropriate targets are identified for further development in key areas of learning. Useful discussions of ways in which each child can be helped at home are sensitively incorporated into these meetings.

51. During each child's time in the nursery, annotated examples of work are retained in a progress book. The book forms part of a comprehensive 'Leaver's Record', which is passed to the child's primary school, as a valuable baseline for the next stage of education.

52. The school's assessment procedures were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Significant progress and improvement have been made recently and the school's policy and procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are now good.

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

53. Parents' views of the school are very positive. Most parents enjoy very constructive and purposeful relationships with the school, and all parents and carers who offered an opinion spoke well of its work. Parents value the very positive atmosphere for play, work and learning within the school. They appreciate the work of the acting headteacher and other staff, and the very good standards of behaviour that are encouraged and achieved by children. Parents' suggestions and concerns are fully addressed, and this creates a mutually caring and trusting environment. The inspection team is in full agreement with the parents' positive views of the school and its work.

54. Parents are pleased with the good quality information they receive through the school prospectus and the governors' annual report. These school documents are written in an accessible style and comply with statutory requirements. Parents value the opportunity to speak with members of staff in another language, for example Gujarati. However, this provision is only available part of the week and communication between minority ethnic

parents and staff is limited. The staff rely on children to ensure effective communication in their home language, and this arrangement occasionally disrupts effective communication between the home and school. Parents state that they enjoy the regular newsletters, which are interesting. Topics taught in the classroom are displayed and accessible to parents. They are complemented by children's work, which is proudly displayed and enables parents to share in their child's achievements and those of the school community.

55. Parents particularly appreciate the information they receive at parents' evenings, and enjoy the events organised by teachers and parents for the community both inside and outside of the school. This is due to the positive attitudes of staff towards parents. During the inspection, a significant number of parents were observed talking purposefully with staff, exchanging and building on the positive relationships that contribute to the work of the school.

56. Parents are consistently encouraged by the headteacher and staff to support learning in the classroom and around the school. Inspection evidence indicates that some parents support learning in the classroom by their involvement. They help to support learning through visits to the library, reading in the library and in school and at home. Documentary evidence indicates that children enjoy sharing books and reading. This helps to raise levels of attainment and contributes significantly to children's progress and development.

57. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning in the home by supporting speaking skills and by playing with toys and sharing books. Parents with bi-lingual skills make an additional contributing by making effective use of their community language. Most parents help finance school visits and ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, and with a good attitude to learning. The governors, particularly parent governors, try to ensure that both parents and staff meet the requirements of the home-school agreement. This support enables the school to continue to flourish as a positive, industrious and harmonious community.

58. Since the last report, the school has continued to develop working links with its parents, maintaining effective channels of communication and building on the good relationships that were observed at the time of the last inspection.

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

59. The leadership and management of the school are good overall, as at the time of the last inspection. Despite a recent period of change and uncertainty, the experienced acting headteacher, who has been in post for a year, has provided stability, clear direction and effective leadership. She has established very firm foundations for the new headteacher, who will take up post shortly. She has formed a largely new staff into a strong team, who are working well together to promote the aims and values of the school and secure good provision for the benefit of the children. As at the time of the last inspection, good relationships permeate the whole nursery community and are a strength of the school.

60. The headteacher delegates responsibilities effectively within a well-constructed framework, and she, with the teacher in charge, supports the staff team well. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. They now have clear job descriptions in which their roles and responsibilities are well defined. The work of the whole staff team is well planned, so that staff can collaborate effectively to meet the needs of the children.

61. There are systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. These are sensitively managed to ensure that new staff are well supported and receive appropriate training so that they grow in confidence. The strong teamwork

involving all staff means that they support each other well in developing their skills and abilities. However, while the school has a satisfactory policy for appraisal and performance management, it has not yet been implemented. This means that the professional development needs of individual staff members have not yet been considered as part of the school's future work. Additionally, the staff have not been set individual targets that contribute to the whole school priorities. The emphasis of the current acting headteacher and chair of governors has been to secure the short-term future of the school and this has been done successfully. There is now a good foundation for the new head teacher to build on in the future.

62. At the time of the last inspection, the school did not have a school development plan. There is now a sound plan in place to support the current work of the school. Priorities and targets for improvement are wisely selected and progress is regularly revised. For example, clear policies are now in place for all key areas of the school's work. These have been drawn up and shared with staff and discussed by the governing body. This is a significant area of recent improvement. However, the current school development plan does not include sufficient significant strategies to ensure that the school sustains its current standards and quality in the longer term. This is partly because the school is awaiting the new headteacher and wanting to give her the opportunity to develop the vision and shape the future direction for the work of the school.

63. Equality of opportunity forms an integral part of the policies and practice of the nursery and is effectively promoted. The nursery is inclusive of the needs of all its children, and good procedures are in place to support children with special educational needs and those who are more able.

64. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. The chairperson has steered the school well through its recent period of uncertainty. The governing body, many of whom are new, is taking a satisfactory and increasingly more active role in shaping the direction of the school, although this role is not yet fully developed. It has appropriate systems and procedures in place to support its involvement in the work of the school, and undertakes training to enhance its strategic capability. Newly established procedures are enabling the governing body to develop more fully its understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. These procedures include individual governors being linked to areas of the curriculum and visits by governors during the school day.

65. There are good systems and procedures in place to secure the smooth running of the school on a daily basis. It is very well staffed, and resourced. The accommodation layout and learning resources have all improved since the last inspection and are very good overall. External work to the playground and internal work to the kitchens and bathroom area have increased the opportunities for children to have a richer curriculum and increased facilities for those with physical disabilities to be integrated into the school. The nursery provides a safe, very clean and attractive learning environment for children to grow and learn.

66. The school is generously resourced financially, and funding per child has risen significantly since the last inspection. Funding has been well targeted to secure improvement in both indoor and outdoor provision. Office procedures and the use of technology in the day-to-day administration and finances are effective and contribute to the smooth running of the school. The recommendations of the last audit report are being implemented. Specific grants are used appropriately.

67. As at the time of the last inspection, good procedures are in place for the administration, management and monitoring of the use of the nursery's resources. The governing body is appropriately involved in financial planning. However, it is at the early stages of examining the implications of the principles of "best value" in relation to its

spending decisions. The high level of funding and very generous staffing are sensibly directed to secure a good quality learning environment, good teaching and good learning outcomes for children. As a result, overall, and as at the time of the last inspection, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. To further raise standards the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Ensure that the policy for the appraisal and performance management of individual staff members is implemented and impacts on further improving the quality and standards of the work of the school.
- Ensure that the governing body increases its effectiveness in monitoring the work and standards of the school and uses the information to establish a longer-term strategic vision and direction for the work of the school.
- Sustain and further improve the current good standards and quality of the school's work by:
  - \* ensuring that the new headteacher builds on the schools existing work;
  - \* including in the school development plan strategies and priorities to ensure in the longer term a clear direction for the schools future work.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	0	4	16	2	0	0	0
<b>Percentage</b>	0	18	73	9	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	73
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

*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	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	37

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	88

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	<b>2000-2001</b>
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	£
Total income	167055.00
Total expenditure	160809.00
Expenditure per pupil	4346.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	126890.00
Balance carried forward to next year	18935.00

#### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

79
23

## Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	87.0	4.0	4.0	0	4.0
My child is making good progress in school.	65.0	26.0	0	0	9.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52.0	39.0	0	0	9.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11.0	50.0	17.0	6.0	17.0
The teaching is good.	65.0	26.0	0	0	9.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57.0	30.0	9.0	0	4.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78.0	17.0	0	0	4.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35.0	57.0	0	0	9.0
The school works closely with parents.	32.0	59.0	5.0	0	5.0
The school is well led and managed.	65.0	30.0	0	0	5.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62.0	29.0	5.0	0	5.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50.0	25.0	5.0	0	20.0

## **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**

69. Children are on target to attain the recommended early learning goals by the age of five years. All children including those with English as an additional language make very good progress, particularly in developing their confidence, independence and self-esteem. Overall provision for this area of development was good at the time of the last inspection. It has improved further and is now very good.

70. Children, including those who only joined the nursery four weeks ago, are very familiar with and remember the school's expectations, systems and routines. The great majority show confidence and independence from the first moment of their daily arrival, finding their own pegs, removing and hanging up coats themselves, and happily joining their home groups. Children are able to sit, listen and join in with more structured 'home group' activities led by a member of staff. They then use the activity boards well to make their own 'free choice' of activities, and move around the nursery and outdoors with assurance and obvious enjoyment. The great majority are able to sustain a single activity for a good length of time for their age. They concentrate well and co-operate and interact well with other children and adults. They accept guidance and support willingly. Most are able to work alone or in small and large group situations very happily. For example, twelve children co-operated together delightfully for half an hour in the large outdoor sandpit, discussing and exploring ideas, sharing tools and taking turns very harmoniously and productively. Most are fully aware of appropriate behaviour, what is right and wrong, and the importance of considering others' needs. There are very good systems in place to ensure fairness and the inclusion of all. The children know and respect these procedures.

71. Teaching is good overall and very well planned to develop children personally, socially and emotionally. The policy, aims and practical learning activities in this area are well considered, and shared with all staff. Expectations are high: there is a very good balance of staff directed and independent learning, and all staff work together as a team to ensure very good provision. Staff model appropriate social and emotional behaviours for children very well. They are calm, kind, thoughtful and supportive, and children learn well from their good examples. Staff encourage children to take turns, act as helpers, co-operate in pairs and groups, and tidy up their own equipment. Children's individual needs and home circumstances are sensitively taken into account, and all are helped to feel safe and accepted. Ensuring that children receive praise for their efforts and achievements raises their self-esteem. Staff enable them to succeed at their own levels and to develop further. They are very patient and supportive of any children with learning or behavioural difficulties so that they too can settle and learn. Staff use sign language and good visual resources to further encourage children's access and confidence.

72. There is a very effective curriculum for this area of learning because it forms part of all activities and all aspects of the school's work. Parents, are, rightly, particularly pleased with the way in which children improve their personal and social skills. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the school.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

73. Children's standards of attainment are good. The majority enter the nursery with average standards for their age. They make good progress in their acquisition of language skills and, as a result, the majority are well on target to attain at least the nationally recognised early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception year. These standards are an improvement since the last inspection where pupils' progress was sound and attainment as expected for their age.

74. The children's speaking and listening skills are good and they are used well through all areas of the curriculum. Almost all children, even though some have not been in school long, listen carefully to the staff and each other. They are keen to hear what is being said and they follow instructions well. The majority speak clearly and confidently, in phrases and simple sentences, and chatter spontaneously to each other and staff. They respond well to questions about their feelings, ideas and plans. A few children have less well-developed speech and answer in single words rather than phrases or sentences, sometimes muddling beginnings of words. All the same, these children are confident to express themselves and participate fully in all areas of the curriculum.

75. The very few children who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language understand the speech that they hear around them and are confident to communicate through words and gestures. They too are able to access all areas of the curriculum.

76. In the role-play areas and particularly the post office, children seriously assume the roles of post person, counter assistant and shopper. They confidently buy stamps by exchanging money, discuss confidently what clothes to dress in for their parts, and talk with each other and the teacher about who they are going to post letters and birthday cards to. Children concentrate for a long time and maintain their interest well in their chosen activities. At story time, they listen avidly to the teacher and join in with familiar stories. Higher attaining children hold longer conversations and are able to develop logical descriptive sequences using an increased range of vocabulary.

77. Books are promoted as exciting and special. All the children enjoy books and stories and make good progress in developing their early reading skills. They choose books readily and play at being the teacher with a friend, pointing at pictures and pretending to read the story as if to a class. They recognise books and characters by the picture clues on the covers, and urge the staff to read favourites. Pictures promote discussion and they readily laugh at funny characters or happenings. Older and higher attaining children recognise some letters and can point to individual words which start or end with a known letter. They have a good memory for and sounds, such as o and u, learnt in a previous phonics session, and can use and recognise them in words written in a sentence. Children handle books well with care and choose them sensibly from the well-resourced book boxes.

78. Children make good progress in developing early writing skills. Over half the children hold pencils and crayons correctly when making marks on paper and when drawing. The majority understand that letters when put together will spell their name, and a number of older and higher attaining children are making good efforts to write their names. They form their letters correctly, some with considerable success. Children concentrate well and try hard to practise the writing that the staff have modelled for them.

79. The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of very good lessons and one satisfactory. All the staff are very skilful in promoting children's listening and speaking skills. Clear rules are established and staff have high expectations that children will achieve. They take every opportunity to ensure children hear a rich use of language. Whatever the area of

learning, staff ask individuals and groups good specific questions which encourage them to make choices and talk about what they are doing and why. For example, a staff member deliberately gave a shy child a letter that was too big to go in the post box. This encouraged the child to say, 'Miss, it won't go in the box', and an extended conversation followed about why not and what might happen in this instance. The adult constantly ensured that the child built up ideas and expressed them in a logical way, using less familiar vocabulary in the context of the role play conversation.

80. For a child with English as an additional language, the staff member helped the others in the group to understand the child's ideas by providing words to finish off the phrases and sentences he was trying to use to describe the picture of an animal. Another adult became a new fireman who was not sure what to do. This encouraged and enabled a child playing on his own to explain what to do, but the adult also wanted to know why, so the child was challenged to extend their thinking even further. The staff give much praise and encouragement to build confidence and urge children to try activities. This rich use of language for different purposes ensures that children are very well motivated and keen to listen. Staff take every opportunity to extend children's language in the outside area.

81. Staff plan activities thoroughly and children clearly understand the learning intentions of each activity. Resources are well thought through and placed so that children can be as independent as possible. Good records are kept of the activities children have undertaken and their progress towards their individual targets.

82. This aspect is well led and managed so that children receive a rich curriculum, very well planned to include the best possible communication, language and literacy experiences.

### **Mathematical development**

83. Children achieve good standards and make good progress in their mathematical development. The great majority are on target to achieve the early learning goals for mathematical development by the end of the Foundation Stage, and some will exceed them. As at the time of the last inspection, attainment is overall in line with the expectations for age on entry. At that time progress was considered sound. It is now good as children do better than expected compared to their standards on entry, particularly in developing numeracy skills across the curriculum. This reflects the good provision and teaching for this area of learning.

84. The rich provision for daily mathematical experiences ensures that children are focussed on numeracy from the moment that they join their 'home groups' at the start of each morning or afternoon. They enjoy the very good variety of opportunities to count, recognise numbers and incorporate them into songs, rhymes and stories at the start of the session. For example, one 'home group' thoroughly enjoyed singing 'Ten in a Bed', taking it in turns to remove a toy from a little bed as 'they all rolled over and one fell out'. Most could use their fingers to count down to 'none in the bed'. Two children in the group were able to work out how many would be in the bed or on the carpet at any one time.

85. All children concentrate very well on the more formal mathematical experiences. They are keen to use their skills in 'free choice' activities, such as counting out stamps and money at the post office counter. They enjoy developing their understanding of size and shape as they carefully select appropriately sized paper to wrap a parcel for posting. They enjoy learning to draw a number of objects and write numbers to match them. Children are beginning to use counting in their games, for example counting the steps they take or the children in their group. Most children are developing an understanding of concepts such as

'more' and 'less' and 'bigger' and 'smaller'. Some of the higher attaining children readily count and recognise numbers one to ten. They spot errors in counting, and try to solve their own problems, for example, in relation to shape and space. Above all, the great majority of children enjoy their mathematical learning.

86. The range and quality of teaching and provision for mathematical development have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Very well planned experiences are provided across the whole range of the mathematical curriculum in both structured and informal ways. Staff seize opportunities to promote mathematical understanding, for example by supporting children's own efforts to write numbers with their fingers in their foam pictures and to share out coins and parcels in the post office shop. Very good displays and resources in the room and numbers displayed in the outside environment help children to engage readily with mathematical learning.

87. All staff are skilful in observing children's independent progress and intervene appropriately, when necessary, to support and extend learning. Children whose mathematical concepts are less well developed are often very effectively supported in one to one practical situations. Higher attaining children are similarly supported in individual or small group activities to actively extend their learning, to very good effect. All staff have a good knowledge of children's individual needs and of their targets for mathematical development. They work as a team to integrate mathematical learning in a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors to ensure valued and well-targeted opportunities for independent and supported development.

88. Each child's experiences and progress are carefully monitored, assessed and recorded. Outcomes are used very effectively to plan for individual and group needs and to influence the school's overall provision for mathematical development. Progress and targets are regularly discussed with parents and carers, and they are given useful guidance on how mathematical understanding can be further developed at home.

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

89. Children achieve good standards and make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are on target to achieve the expectations of the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The school has maintained the good standards of achievement noted at the time of the last inspection.

90. The majority of children enter the nursery with attainment broadly in line with expectations for their age. They are beginning to develop an interest in the world around them. They are keen to take part in routines, such as naming the day of the week, noting who is present and absent and recounting home news. The great majority enjoy the nursery environment and know it well, taking an active interest in significant changes in nursery displays or activities.

91. They are keen to take part in activities to promote their knowledge and understanding of the world. These include familiar activities involving sound, water, dough and clay. They use simple tools such as scissors and spades competently, and explore new areas of learning through books, the computer or the lives of people at work. They enjoy examining the features of living things. Children notice and talk about patterns and changes, for example in colours as they paint, the weather outside and their lives at home and at school.

92. The nursery has significantly extended its resources for information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection and children now enjoy good extended learning opportunities in this area. As at the time of the last inspection, they are

making good progress in using the mouse to control the screen and learning from ICT programmes. For example, 'Postman Pat' software is well chosen to help children to extend their ICT skills as they learn about the life of a post office worker. They strongly enjoy working alone and with support to carry out tasks on the computer, and many concentrate very well for their age. The staff are continuing to receive training in ICT so that they can make further use of it in their teaching.

93. Recently staff have worked together to develop a comprehensive policy for learning and teaching in relation to knowledge and understanding of the world. Resources have been improved to a good level. The school has recognised the need to further extend opportunities for investigation and exploration, and is actively incorporating new opportunities into both the indoor and outdoor curriculum. Appropriate opportunities are created to help children to appreciate and explore their own culture and that of other communities.

94. The quality of teaching is now good overall. The calm working atmosphere and encouragement for individuals and small groups to discuss their thoughts and try out their ideas are positive features of provision. Children's progress is observed, assessed and recorded well, and informs next steps in their learning. There are sensible plans in place to extend to this area the use of more formal targets for future learning. All children have good access to the learning opportunities provided, and children with special needs and high attainers are well supported in their development.

### **Physical development**

95. Children's standards of attainment are good. The majority enter the nursery with above average standards and almost all make good progress so that they are well on target to exceed the recommended early learning goals by the end of the reception year. These good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

96. The children have very good attitudes to their learning and behave very well in their chosen activities. They show very good personal and social skills, taking turns and sharing equipment with patience and understanding. This is particularly evident when, for example, they sit holding an egg timer to wait their turn to rock on the horse. Children freely explore the rich range of activities they are offered indoors and outdoors, independently or with others. They express joyfully and spontaneously their enthusiasm for their learning in this area and move around confidently and safely.

97. Using fine manipulative skills, children successfully join jigsaws and mould dough into imaginative and recognisable shapes. They show skill in cutting wool, paper and thin card, and spread glue carefully over a specific area. In the outdoor area, children operate bikes and push and pull toys such as prams and carts. They rarely bump into anything and have good control of speed and turns, easily varying their pace and stopping quickly at a given spot. The majority of children show good balancing skills when they complete a circuit, going up and down different levels at the end of each plank. A large number confidently increase their speed and risk falling off when a staff member introduces a shark into the game. This causes much fun and good humour. Those who fall in are excited but pleased not to have their legs eaten by the shark!

98. When running, children demonstrate increasing control as they fly a paper streamer in the wind. They learn how to raise and lower their arm to catch the wind speed, and varying their pace and route to make the most of the wind's direction.

99. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is always good. Staff quietly support and encourage each individual, helping them to express their needs, preferences and ideas. All staff constantly seek to promote the next step for each child. Questions to children are challenging. Staff are skilled at knowing when to join in a game in the role of participant and when to be a teacher quickly intervening to ensure good learning. The planning of each activity is clear, and specific and purposeful learning objectives are well identified. Staff give clear, purposeful instructions and model skills clearly for children to imitate. Praise and encouragement are used well to promote children's self esteem.

100. The curriculum for physical activity is well planned to ensure that children have the opportunity to build on their physical skills. Additionally, the good arrangements for monitoring children's attainment and progress ensure that the needs of all are met, including those of the few children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. All children have good access to the planned activities.

101. Physical development is well led and managed. There is a wide range of good resources that are used imaginatively to give children good quality experiences in this area of learning. Both indoor and outdoor play is well integrated into the curriculum.

### **Creative development**

102. Children's standards of attainment are good. They enter the nursery with average standards, and make good progress in their creative development. This means that, by the end of the reception year, children are well on target to exceed the early learning goals expected for their age. These standards have been soundly maintained since the last inspection.

103. The children have very good attitudes to their learning and behave very well, with obvious enjoyment of their chosen activities. Their concentration is very good, and many work for up to half an hour co-operatively or on their own. Children's personal and social skills are very well developed in this area of learning. They know the routines and systems well, and this enables them to be fully independent. One child at the painting table was observed to choose an apron, roll up sleeves, select materials of paint and sponges, complete a printing, put the printing on a drying rack, hang up apron and wash hands. This was completely unaided by any adult.

104. When painting, the majority of children are able to mix two colours to achieve a required shade. They hold brushes well and use bold brush strokes for outlines and fine strokes for details. In the fine sand, they spoon sand carefully into containers with good control so as not to spill it. In the outdoor wet sand, they load and unload sand as cargo in their lorries and develop complex imaginative routes through sand barriers and over built hills and around walls and circuits.

105. In small group time, children sing their favourite songs and rhymes enthusiastically and are keen to learn new ones. The majority sing clearly and are happy to add actions to their songs or perform to an audience. They select small toys and puppets and control them well in imaginative games. Clay is rolled flat, pushed into balls and pulled into sausages and shapes. Water is funnelled, siphoned and containers poured and emptied. Children identify and draw carefully the features of a face.

106. The quality of teaching is always good in this area of learning. A rich, varied and interesting curriculum is planned to promote children's skills, feelings and imagination. Activities are well thought out and staff are very aware of the learning experiences they want

the children to have as a result of the planned activities. The curriculum is well planned following a series of themes. It is suitably linked to the stepping stones in the early years' curriculum, but also follows children's own ideas and interests.

107. There is good preparation and organisation to ensure children have the best possible opportunity to develop independence. Staff are particularly skilful at helping children to extend their learning. They ask challenging questions of individuals and support children well to think about what they are doing. Children are encouraged to review their choices and options, and to talk about what they have found out and how they feel. Staff skilfully involve children in existing groups and promote children's achievement within the groups. This makes children feel valued for their efforts, and safe, secure and confident in having a try.

108. This was shown well in a planned activity where children made pictures and designs from foam. The staff member made the activity great fun by drawing funny faces and designs, and then encouraged children to be expressive in their own work with both their fingers and talk. This was an excellent sensory experience that the children thoroughly enjoyed. All children have good access to the planned activities and are well supported in their learning as individuals or part of a planned or unplanned group.

109. Procedures for monitoring and assessing children's attainment and progress are good. Staff keep detailed records of children's daily creative choices, and build up a good profile of pupil's creative development. This is used to well to plan the next steps of each child's learning. Regular staff discussions about groups and individual children ensure that children's needs are known and catered for well by all staff, not just the child's key worker.

110. Creative development is well led and managed. Close attention is paid to maintaining the good quality of the curriculum and learning experiences for the benefit of the children. Resources are very good. They are well stored, and are attractive at all times.