

INSPECTION REPORT

EVESHAM NURSERY SCHOOL

EVESHAM

LEA area: WORCESTERSHIRE

Unique reference number: 132104

Headteacher: Naomi Christelow

Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett
1569

Dates of inspection: Monday 4th March – Wednesday 6th March 2002

Inspection number: 243019

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Four Pools Road Evesham
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Appropriate authority:	Worcestershire
Name of chair of governors:	NA
Date of previous inspection:	07/07/1998

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			Mathematical development	How well are pupils taught?
			Knowledge and Understanding of the World	How well is the school led and managed?
			English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
OIN 11084	JANE HUGHES	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
OIN 11321	JUNE HUNTER	Team inspector	Physical development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Personal, Social and Emotional development	
			Creative development	
			Special educational needs	
			Equal opportunities	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	[5]
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?	 [10]
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
 HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	 [12]
 HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	 [13]
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	 [15]
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	 [16]
 HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	 [17]
 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	 [18]
 PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	 [19]
 PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	 [22]

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Evesham Nursery is an average sized nursery school situated near the town centre and sharing a site with Evesham High School. There are 50 children, aged between three and four years old, of whom 28 are girls and 22 are boys. They all attend part-time and families travel from around the Evesham town centre area. It is the only Local Education Authority (LEA) nursery school in Worcestershire and, because it is very popular with parents, it is oversubscribed. The children are taught by two teachers, including the headteacher. In addition, there is one full time and one part time nursery nurse and two part time teaching assistants. Twenty eight per cent of the children have been identified as having special educational needs, which is much higher than when the school was last inspected. Of these, three have significant special needs, although, in line with LEA policy, they are not yet statemented. All the children in nursery speak English as the main language at home. Despite the high levels identified as having special educational needs, many children arrive in school with a good command of spoken English. As a result, children's attainment on entry to school varies considerably but is just about what would be expected from three year olds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an excellent school. Children are on line to well exceed the expected standards by the time they leave. Leadership and relationships are excellent and the teaching is very good. Children make very good progress during their time in nursery and they are very well cared for. The school provides an excellent basis for children's future learning.

What the school does well

- Children achieve very high standards, well above those expected from children of this age
- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent
- Leadership of the headteacher is excellent
- Relationships are excellent and the school takes very good care of the children
- It establishes an excellent ethos and makes outstanding provision for children's personal development

What could be improved

- The school has a clearly stated set of priorities for the future. In the light of its outstanding provision it has no significant weaknesses

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1998. Only a small numbers of issues were identified and all of these have been successfully addressed. The school has continued to make very good progress in the intervening years, particularly in the way in which it has maintained the high standards recognized last time. Children's attainment when they enter nursery is very carefully assessed now and parents have a key role to play. They help staff to compile a detailed profile of their child, identifying what each one can do and how they learn. Curriculum planning is also better. It covers all the areas of learning well and sets out work to be covered, as well as identifying how activities will be organized to meet the needs of different children. The school development plan is easier to follow and sets clear objectives that are costed and planned within a sensible timescale. Priorities for the future are agreed and

clearly understood by all staff and the school is very well placed to build on its current strengths.

STANDARDS

Children follow the Foundation Stage curriculum which is recommended for both nursery and reception classes. The majority are on course to well exceed the national standards known as the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Children are expected to reach these goals by the end of the Foundation Stage so this represents very good achievement. They make very good progress during their time at Evesham nursery. As a result of the school's positive ethos and the high expectations set by all staff, children are extremely confident and assured. They are happy to make decisions for themselves. Children hold sensible conversations, often using complex sentences to describe what they have been doing. Many can count to twenty without difficulty and they are very accomplished at using what they know practically, often using the correct mathematical vocabulary. An outstanding feature of what they achieve is the way in which children 'take risks'. They do not worry about getting things wrong but are always prepared to try out new ideas, happily debating with their friends how they should go about a task. One of the reasons they reach such high standards is because staff are always encouraging them to take on these new challenges, never settling for the first answer or the simple solution. As a result all groups of children, including higher attainers, are set suitable tasks. Children are expected to think for themselves and, as a result, their levels of independence are quite remarkable. Those who have special educational needs are provided with very good levels of extra support by adults to ensure they can take an active part in all the areas of learning. They make very good progress towards the individual targets set for them. The school carefully monitors the performance of different groups through detailed assessments and individual records. Both the school's own data and inspection findings confirm there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children show excellent attitudes in their approach to everything they do. They are extremely enthusiastic and thoroughly enjoy their time in school.
Behaviour	Excellent. Children behave impeccably; they follow routines effortlessly and are clear about staff expectations of their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Children's personal development is outstanding – they are so responsive to adults' constant demands.
Attendance	Very good for children of this age. Most are brought to school on time.

Children's response to adults is excellent. They are very comfortable with school routines and participate wholeheartedly in all activities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
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.

The quality of teaching is very good overall and many of the lessons are excellent. The quality of the teaching is consistently high across all areas of the curriculum. Planning of work is now excellent because it provides such a valuable tool to support the teaching. It is very detailed and sets out what staff want children to learn. However, it also acknowledges the professionalism of the adults by allowing them to respond to the children as they learn through individual activities. An outstanding feature of the teaching is the high expectations that are set for children in terms of their work, behaviour and growing independence. Because they know the children so well, staff organize the activities at just the right level. Some excellent examples of these were seen in the way all adults successfully used an end of session reading activity as a means of extending children's language skills and increasing their confidence to talk about books. Each adult involved with the reading session encouraged their group to select a suitable book and then retell the story using picture clues and, for some children, recognized some of the words. No individual or groups are left out, so that the particular needs of higher attainers or those with learning difficulties are equally well supported. Success is constantly rewarded by telling children how well they are doing and this helps to speed up the learning still further.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. The very well planned curriculum meets all the statutory requirement. A rich learning environment, both indoors and out, helps to develop and extend children's early learning.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Very good. Children's needs are identified early in the year and they are very well supported. Work is carefully matched to their needs and capabilities.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. There is a tremendous range, quality and diversity about the provision in all these areas.
How well the school cares for its children	All staff are very sensitive to children's needs. Pastoral care is very good; the school environment is busy and welcoming, and engages children's attention.

Staff work extremely well as a team to ensure that home school links are of the highest order. Communication with parents is concise and presented to a high standard. Parents receive a first class review of the progress their children make in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership is excellent. She leads by example and has established a very effective staff team. This is one of the strengths of the school. There is a clear educational direction.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school has no governing body as the LEA is the appropriate authority. Nevertheless, the LEA contact officer and an independent consultant have a detailed knowledge of the school and fulfil valuable roles as its 'critical friends'.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is always seeking out ways in which it can improve. Outstanding levels of monitoring and evaluation ensure that appropriate action for improvement is taken wherever necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school is careful to obtain best value when spending its money. It measures the impact of its spending on improved learning and standards.

Staffing levels and accommodation are good. Resources for learning are excellent and they are very well organised so that children can choose for themselves. The school consistently applies the principles of best value when selecting goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Standards are good and the school is highly thought ofTeaching is good and parents find staff easy to approachChildren enjoy coming to school and they behave very wellChildren are encouraged to be independentThey receive very good levels of information before their children start school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some parents felt that children were not given enough work to do at home

Inspection findings agree with the parents' overwhelmingly positive views. Parents are very supportive and a very good dialogue exists between school and home. Bearing in mind the age of the children, a sufficient amount of work is available for them to do at home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's standards on entry are what might be expected from three year olds.
2. They make very good progress during their time at Evesham nursery and achieve high standards in all the areas of learning. The majority are on course to well exceed the Early Learning Goals (the standards which they are expected to reach meet by the end of the Foundation Stage). Such is the quality of what they achieve that some of the older children are already reaching these levels.
3. Standards are so high because lessons are exciting and demanding and children behave very well. An outstanding feature of their achievement is the level of independence shown by all the children, even those who are among the youngest.
4. Children enter the nursery happily and immediately settle into the routine of the school day. They are very confident to try new activities and concentrate and persist at tasks for significant lengths of time. Relationships are excellent and children treat adults and each other properly. All work industriously individually, in pairs and in small groups or large groups for activities and story. Children are sensitive to the needs of others, sharing tools, equipment and resources fairly. For example, in the 'Farm Shop', children shared the role of shopkeeper and allowed others to write in the order book without any prompting by adults. Children demonstrate high levels of personal responsibility. When working without adults, they select the tools and equipment necessary to complete activities for themselves. All children handle equipment and materials with great care. They replace all resources methodically and tidy away at the end of activities.
5. Children have excellent listening skills and respond positively when asked to do something. This was particularly evident during group activities when they were able to describe in detail what they had been told and how they planned to carry out their work. They have a great confidence about their own language skills, taking every opportunity to engage in conversation, speaking clearly and expressing their views and opinions. A good example of this was seen in the way children selected books that interested them and then shared the stories with their friends or adults, explaining why the book was so enjoyable. Writing skills are very good with many children writing their own names clearly, often writing lists and instructions as they learn about the different purposes of writing.
6. Children achieve high standards in their mathematical development. Most can count reliably up to ten with the majority able to go much further. They are very successful in applying their knowledge in practical situations, a feature the school works hard to encourage. Working out how much customers owed in the 'Farm Shop' involved children making some complex calculations, adding and subtracting, as 'customers' chose their fruit and vegetables. Their use of mathematical language is much more developed than might be expected for children of this age. They talk confidently about size, shape and pattern; for example, as they decide how an area could be covered with carpet tiles.
7. Children are developing a good understanding of many of the features of the world around them. Their skills in observing and then discussing what they see are remarkable. As a matter of course, they select magnifying glasses to look at the snails that are kept within the classroom, explaining what they need to stay alive and comparing the food they eat to their own preferences. Their skills in using information and communications technology are very

well advanced. Children confidently select programs on the computer and use the mouse well and print out their finished work.

8. All children confidently handle small tools such as pencils, chalk, paintbrushes and glue brushes to paint pictures and make collages. Outdoors, children use a good range of climbing equipment with confidence to climb, balance and slide. Children show maturity using the space safely and are aware of the space others need. Children travelling through the willow tunnel understand that it is necessary to agree with others the direction in which to travel. All can pull and push trucks successfully with and without passengers around the outdoor area, negotiating other activities and children with care.

9. Children make very good progress in expressing their feelings in creative activities such as painting, modelling, role-play and music making. They draw, paint and make models of houses and machines with great enthusiasm. Children are aware of different textures as they select different kinds of material and feathers. All work imaginatively and co-operatively in role-play areas, developing the role of museum attendant or farm shopkeeper. Children make rapid progress and achieve highly in performing dance. They can match movements to music. For example, children performing an 'Indian Stick Dance' at a local dance festival could follow a series of movements, tap their sticks in rhythm and moved backwards and forwards in time to the music.

10. A major factor in the school's success is the fact that all groups of children make good gains in their learning. One of the reasons more children than usual fall within the special needs category is because the school works very hard to pick up on any difficulties early in the year. As a result of the very good support they receive, these children learn at a good pace when compared to what they had achieved previously. They are given a wide range of interesting and challenging tasks which meet their individual needs and requirements. Boys and girls make similar rates of progress and there are no significant differences between children from different backgrounds. The needs of the higher attainers are extremely well catered for. All staff make sure that these children are continually challenged when they are asked questions about their work and are set tasks that are harder.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Children have excellent attitudes to school. They are keen to come each day and once there, they throw themselves into all the activities with equal measures of determination and interest. Children may take the daily diet of exciting learning experiences for granted, but they never give less than total concentration and commitment to what they are doing. They are very busy throughout sessions and no time is wasted drifting aimlessly from one activity to the next. From the time they 'sign in' on the whiteboard, to the time they leave, children are totally involved in everything around them. This is because staff create such a fascinating learning environment for them. For instance, children are captivated by the warm glow of the fairy lights strung around the cosy reading alcove. Others are lured outside by the limitless opportunities offered by the well stocked 'Farm Shop' and the carefully tended garden.

12. Standards of behaviour are excellent and children have a very clear understanding of the high expectations staff have of them. They are extremely polite and listen carefully when someone speaks to them. Children clearly know the right way to behave because the headteacher and staff are quick to remind them. They are also aware of how their behaviour affects other people. Children share resources very well. Even when they really struggle to do the right thing and let others use parts of the marble run, for example, they learn from the very good example set by adults and allow others to play. When out of school on a visit, children are a credit to the staff and their parents. Although excited, they sat patiently during the coach journey. Their behaviour was exemplary in front of a full auditorium, as they participated in a local 'dance festival'. There have been no exclusions from school.

13. Relationships are excellent between all members of the school community; this high quality interaction between staff and children is at the heart of what the school does best. There is an extremely strong sense of trust apparent between adults, parents and children in the school. Children treat one another with respect and offer help and support to their friends. They 'look after' others when they have had a bump and mirror the sensitivity staff show to them in their relationships with others.

14. Children's exceptional personal development is an outstanding feature of Evesham Nursery School. That children demonstrate such remarkable levels of maturity and self confidence is due, in no small part, to the consistent work of the headteacher and staff. Children take the best from each learning experience; they accept that staff will constantly question them about what they are doing and they answer willingly. For example, as small groups of children made honey sandwiches, staff prompted them to make decisions about which of the three types of honey they preferred, whether they liked brown or white bread and to estimate how many sandwiches they could cut out from one round of bread. As the children sat eating their sandwiches, another member of staff sat with them and asked them to explain exactly how they had made their sandwiches. This reinforced their learning, extended their speaking and listening skills and also added to their social development. Children accept as normal that staff expect them to do as much as possible for themselves and this encourages them to become self confident and exceptionally self-motivated. Children help themselves to resources and tidy away again automatically; they happily include visitors as they explain quite seriously where each item should be stored and why. These children are extremely well organised and comfortable in this orderly nursery environment. By the time they leave the school, they already have a very firm foundation as independent learners.

15. Levels of attendance are well above those usually found in nursery schools. Parents are very conscientious about bringing their children to school on time. Most inform the school of any reasons for absence.

HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is very good overall and is a better picture than when the school was last inspected. On that occasion, there were fewer lessons judged to be excellent. The high standards found last time have been maintained and built on. There is a higher proportion of excellent teaching because there is a greater consistency between members of staff in the way they organize their work. Staff provide children with an extensive range of exciting activities which ensures that they experience the full range of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

17. The school's approach to teaching and learning is carefully considered and very effective. This is because it is based on providing children with lots of first hand experiences where they are required to make decisions about their own learning. Planning of lessons is a strong feature of the school's work and is excellent. Learning objectives are clear and precise and this contributes to the consistent approach found with all staff. Additionally, all staff have the confidence to try things out, taking risks if they feel it will assist children's learning. The planning is viewed as an essential guide rather than a straightjacket. A good example of this was seen in the way staff responded to the spontaneous play opportunities provided by the outdoor play area.

18. Particular features of the high quality teaching include staff with very high levels of subject knowledge and excellent questioning techniques. They use questions to extend children's learning and increase their vocabulary such as "just remind me how you made those sandwiches that we had for snack this morning." This stimulated a detailed debate about the 'best' way to prepare food, with all the group members involved and enthusiastic because

the adult valued each of their contributions. The activity then moved on, allowing higher attainers to start recording what they had found out. Prompted by the teacher, one girl began talking about the 'instructions' that the rest of the class would need to follow if they were to be as successful. The teacher wrote down her ideas as the child gave a detailed description of what would be needed. "We used our hands to put the bread together but we washed them first so there would be no germs," she said. The adult followed this by drawing out other possible uses for 'instructions'. One group member interjected to talk about the way "mummy follows the instructions to put the toy together for my brother". Because the adult knew the children so well and was confident to respond to their interests, the conversation encompassed much wider topics than originally planned and, as a result, children learnt a lot more. The outcome of the activity saw many of the group 'writing' the instructions so they could pass them on to others.

19. Resources within the school and in the outdoor area are excellent and all staff make very good use of them to support their teaching. They provide children with a simple orienteering course around the garden where they have to identify features such as the maze, play shed and climbing frame on their maps. Children note down where they found the clues left for them. Some find this difficult at first because it is a demanding task for such young children. Nevertheless, they all persevered and the adults offered just the right level of support. In all their activities, adults encourage children to observe closely and then talk about what they have seen, discussing changes they have spotted since they last explored a particular part of the school. The indoor learning environment, despite its limited size, is rich, attractive and exceptionally well cared for. Resources are plentiful and of high quality. Staff organize them thoughtfully so that children's independence skills are encouraged. There is a clearly understood expectation that children will select resources independently and then carefully tidy them away at the end of the session.

20. Another reason the teaching is so successful is because different groups of children within the school are equally well taught. This is because the staff identify all children's needs early on and then track their individual progress closely. Some very good examples of this are seen in the way plans for lessons include suitable extension activities for children who are higher attainers. This means children's work is not too easy and the pace of their learning is always fast. Teaching is similarly successful in meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs. They are very well taught and each has a detailed plan which sets out targets for them to work towards. The information contained within these plans is known to all staff and acted upon to make sure no one is left out. Staff set tasks that build children's confidence and encourage them to be independent and think for themselves. The tasks also take full account of children's individual strengths and weaknesses. For example, during a role play activity, one boy who was particularly timid was reluctant to take part initially and made little contribution to the discussions. The adult working with the group knew exactly how to respond, making sure he was not pressured but patiently encouraged him to take on one of the roles within the 'Farm Shop'. She focused her attention on offering ideas and suggestions about what he might be selling and he was soon becoming actively involved. Not only did his language skills develop but also his self esteem increased and the adult was able to take a back seat, taking note of the very good progress he was making.

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

21. The school has an excellent curriculum. It offers a rich learning environment both indoors and out with a wide range of activities and a variety of experiences. It prepares children very well for the next stage of education.

22. The school has very effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. These are carefully planned so that they are included throughout the activities the children undertake.

23. Curriculum planning is excellent. Following the last inspection, the school has reviewed all stages of planning. The six areas of the curriculum are now linked to the Early Learning Goals and planned in detail identifying, for example, what staff want children to learn, key questions to ask, vocabulary to be taught and who will be helping them. There is a very good balance between child initiated and adult directed activities. The high quality planning ensures that all children, including those with special educational needs, are provided with very rich and worthwhile experiences, that encourage confidence, independence and develop their understanding, knowledge and skills.

24. Productive links between assessment and planning are evident in all the school's work. The excellent assessment and tracking procedures ensure that the needs of all the children, including those with special educational needs and the more able children, are met. The detailed information from careful assessment and children's records is always used effectively when planning activities and new challenges for them. Adults have considerable personal knowledge of each child and intuitively ensure the needs of all children are taken into account when supporting activities. All the children are skilfully supported and make very good progress.

25. Very good provision is made for children with special educational needs. Some children's special needs are identified before they start at the nursery through the good links the school has developed with local agencies such as health visitors and general practitioners. Suitable work is planned for the children and the caring, sensitive support the children receive ensures all can take part in their chosen activities. Progress is regularly reviewed and they all make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual educational plans.

26. All children make choices, take decisions and develop quickly as independent learners. They are treated as individuals. Boys and girls have the same choices and care is taken to make sure that they become fully involved in all opportunities and activities. Adults know the children well and any who initially only visit a narrow group of activities are guided by an adult to areas they have missed.

27. The school continues to make very good use of the local community facilities to support and extend children's learning. For example, children visit the Almonry Museum in Evesham, to look at historical objects. They visit Bishops Wood Environmental Centre to explore muddy walks, tree planting and look for mini beasts. Similarly, children go on a boat trip on the river and all go on a family outing to the seaside. Visitors come to the school, such as the police, and an artist. All these activities and experiences broaden and enrich the children's learning.

28. There are good, practical links with the High School. For example, nursery children use the gym in the High School for physical development activities every Friday and student volunteers come to the nursery each morning to put out the outdoor activities and resources for the day. There are also good links with colleges of further education. The school welcomes students such as nursery nurses in training and students on work experience. The headteacher is an active member of the First Schools Cluster Group which meets regularly to share good practice and to organise joint events. For example, reception class teachers come to visit the school to see nursery children at work. Links with the primary schools to which the children transfer continue to be good. School staff come to visit children in the nursery setting and children visit their primary school for social events such as a Teddy Bears' Picnic. The nursery sends the school a detailed record for each child and children take their portfolio of work to the transfer school which helps the move go smoothly.

29. The provision for children's moral and social development is excellent. There is a strong emphasis within the nursery on personal development which is very effective in developing

children's ideas about what is right and wrong, and how to behave. All adults have very high expectations for appropriate behaviour and use praise very successfully to reward good behaviour and effort. The routines and procedures in the nursery are very well developed and consistently applied. For example, all children stop what they are doing and show their hands when listening to an important announcement made by a member of staff. Adults provide very good role models and have very high expectations that the children will show care, concern and respect for one another. They are encouraged to relate effectively to others and to negotiate when working in pairs or small groups, for example, in the 'farm shop' taking orders and serving customers. Children are given responsibilities throughout the nursery session. They choose when to have their drink, are responsible for pouring it and clearing the beaker away afterwards. They make decisions about their learning and select appropriate resources for activities and then are responsible for putting them away.

30. Provision for children's spiritual and cultural development is excellent. Opportunities are provided throughout the curriculum. The current theme of 'growth' encourages children's awareness of the world around them. They observe hyacinths growing in water, noticing the roots. They examine hazel catkins and talk with knowledge about the blossom and buds on the trees in the nursery garden and at home. They take visitors to see the snowdrops and primroses growing in the nursery garden. Adults use spontaneous moments well to develop a sense of wonder. For example, a group of children blowing bubbles looked in amazement as two bubbles joined together and blew away. The adult gave the children time to try to repeat the phenomenon. Similarly, children carrying large feathers watched in amazement as they changed shape when the wind blew.

31. The school successfully teaches the children to appreciate their own and other cultural traditions. The very good planning ensures that all the major festivals such as Christmas, Chinese New Year and Eid are celebrated and this provides the children with an insight into the beliefs and traditions of people of different faiths. For example, when celebrating Christmas, children dress in nativity clothes and act out the story. When celebrating the Chinese New Year, the home corner becomes a Chinese home with appropriate utensils, dressing up clothes and other resources. During the festival of Eid, the home corner becomes a traditional home with related resources. Children are provided with an excellent range of cultural experiences throughout the year. For example, children experience music from other cultures such as Asian music as well as European. They perform to Indian music when dancing an Indian Stick Dance using traditionally decorated sticks and wearing Indian neck scarves. They experience food from other cultures as well as tasting pancakes and honey sandwiches.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Very good provision is made for the support and guidance of children in all areas of their development.

33. Particular strengths include the procedures when children first start school. Parents find this particularly impressive as it concentrates on the individual needs of the child. Staff negotiate with each parent about how long a child will stay to begin with and although it can prove to be quite a long process, parents are supportive and children settle far better as a result.

34. Child protection procedures are very secure. One of the nursery nurses is the designated person for child protection and she liaises with the headteacher about any concerns. The school is extremely conscientious in its duty of care and all adults are aware of the school's welfare procedures.

35. Issues of health and safety are carefully addressed by the school; accidents are recorded and parents are invited to listen to the first fire bell of the year with the children to acclimatise them to the noise. Adults are well briefed on what to do in the event of an emergency.

36. The school's secretary ensures that attendance registers are carefully completed and she also follows up any unexplained absences. Procedures are clear and are consistently implemented; parents understand the importance of regular attendance for their children and they liaise closely with the school about reasons for absence. Most parents bring their children to school on time.

37. All adults working in the school are very active in ensuring that excellent standards of behaviour are consistently encouraged among children. Staff constantly engage children in conversation, ask questions of them and generally make them feel valued. The school secretary provides a valuable link between parents, staff and children, particularly when greeting them and saying goodbye at the end of sessions.

38. The headteacher and staff quickly identify children with special educational needs and make sure parents are involved in all aspects of their care and individual support plans. Parents are particularly appreciative of this aspect of the school's provision. There is very effective liaison with outside support agencies and the school ensures that all children are offered a rich and stimulating range of experiences.

39. Assessment procedures in the school are excellent and provide a very clear picture of the progress children make during their time in school. The last inspection report raised this as a developmental point and the headteacher has refined the systems to ensure detailed records are collated from the first contact a child has with the school. Initial assessments are detailed and well recorded and provide a suitable starting point against which to measure an individual child's progress. Very impressive records of achievement document each child's development and provide parents and local primary schools with clear indications of children's strengths and areas for improvement. Extensive photographic evidence of what each child can do brings this information alive for parents and adds another dimension to the school's extremely thorough record keeping.

40. Staff collect detailed assessment information and use it well to provide the most relevant learning experiences for each child. Daily meetings and clear procedures ensure that each 'keyworker' receives all the available information about children in her group and makes changes to the work planned to reflect this. As these systems work so well, children are faced with just the right level of challenge in the tasks they undertake and they make very good progress. Staff work very hard as a team to ensure they provide excellent levels of academic and personal support and guidance for each child. Three children from each group are regularly tracked and a selection of their work is retained and annotated. Individual record sheets are completed in the second and third terms of school and these are discussed with the children and provide a starting point for the next step in learning. Such detailed procedures underpin the success of the school's efforts to become a reflective and self-evaluating body. The latest initiative is to track children's 'well being' and this is providing staff with a great deal of very useful information. At the end of each year, staff organise a 'Graduation Ceremony' at which the whole school celebrates the achievements of all the children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. A large number of parents returned the questionnaire and their response was overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. Inspection findings confirm parents' positive views of the school. No evidence was found to substantiate the minority of negative views expressed.

42. The headteacher and staff establish an excellent partnership with parents. This begins with the home visit made by staff before a child starts at the school. At this meeting, staff lay down their expectations for each child and this provides parents with a clear foundation on which to base support for their children's learning. The headteacher believes that the whole of successful home school partnership is based on information and negotiation. She ensures that parents have a very clear understanding of 'why' the school is doing something and parents are invited to respond to this.

43. Detailed and informative records are compiled by staff and shared with parents about what their children can do. Parents are invited to three Open Days during the course of the year and each child's progress is summarised and commented upon by the child, parent and staff member. Very detailed and well presented records of achievement are compiled for each child and these provide a clear indication of the progress each child is making.

44. Parents make a very good contribution to the life of the school and to their children's learning. Few come in to help on a regular basis, but a large number offer support for a wide range of workshops during the year. A great diversity of subjects is offered such as self esteem, reading, health or mathematics and it is left to parents to choose which workshops they would most enjoy. Parents also attend the school's Book Day, when staff turn the school into a haven of language and literacy and invite parents in to share books and associated activities with the children. These are very successful and help parents to gain a better understanding of the value of books in their child's development. Parents make good use of the school library and are very supportive of projects such as Story Sacks and Number Sacks, often funding these themselves. Parents provide very good support for any topic work the school undertakes and children bring in many artefacts from home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. Very good progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses identified during the last inspection. This has been achieved against a background of staff changes including the appointment of the headteacher and teacher in the intervening years. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has a clear vision for the future direction of the school and that has been articulated to all partners including staff, parents and children. Challenging children to achieve their best and making them independent learners are key elements within the philosophy. The success of this approach is witnessed in the very high standards achieved. The headteacher is very effective in managing the school and has set up very good systems to monitor children's progress and to check that agreed plans are delivered in practice. Staff operate as a very good team because they have such outstanding leadership and a feature of the school's success in this area is the way in which everyone is constantly trying to improve their practice and make things better for the children. There is a positive ethos about the school which encourages children to 'try things out for themselves' and 'take risks'.

46. The school development plan is a very good document, much better than when the school was last inspected. Then it was criticized for being hard to follow. Now it sets out clearly what the school hopes to achieve for its children with staff able to contribute to the plan. Each objective is costed over an agreed timescale with responsibilities allocated and success criteria set out for all to see.

47. The school has no governing body and the role of 'critical friend' is undertaken jointly by an education officer who is linked to the school and an independent consultant. They play a full and active part in the life of the school, visiting regularly, and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas it is seeking to improve. The school operates very efficiently, with responsibility for the administration shared between the school secretary and the headteacher. Financial resources are allocated by the local authority, and the most recent reports indicate that systems in the school are highly effective. Its use of financial resources is

shrewd and imaginative, with the headteacher very successful in attracting funding from a variety of sources. A very good example of this is the way in which the outdoor play area has been transformed into an excellent facility, providing an outstanding range of physical challenges for the children.

48. Led by the headteacher, staff are always seeking ways in which the school can improve its own performance. They analyse their own work carefully and check on the progress made by individuals and groups of children. In doing this, they identify early on in the year those who might need extra support and who might be higher attainers. This helps them to meet everyone's needs by setting out individual programmes of work where necessary. Staff also gather valuable data which enables them to measure the overall progress made by children in each of the areas of learning and then make sure a suitable emphasis is given if weaknesses are identified. The quality of the school's data and the evaluations it makes of its own work are both strengths that reflect an open and honest approach to school improvement.

49. Staffing levels are good and the funds allocated to support children who have special needs are very well used. All staff work closely together to ensure children's individual needs are known and acted upon. Children who are in this category receive very good levels of support that allow them to experience the full curriculum range.

50. Resources are excellent. They are imaginatively used and carefully organised so that children can choose for themselves, helping them to become more independent. There is a clear expectation that children will be able to select material themselves, make sensible choices and then tidy away when they have finished.

51. The school is housed in well maintained, temporary accommodation. Staff have transformed the limited facilities inside into a most attractive, stimulating learning environment where children's work and achievements are celebrated. The outdoor play provision is exceptional and gives children wonderful opportunities to experience an exciting and challenging curriculum. These include two willow tunnels, a climbing frame, water features and a butterfly border.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. This is an excellent school. Its priorities for improvement have been identified within the school's own sophisticated school review procedures. There are no significant weaknesses.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	32
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	10	13	11	0	0	0	0
Percentage	30	38	32	0	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 approximately three percentage points. In addition five sessions were observed where there was no direct adult input.

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	NA

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	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	121600
Total expenditure	121722
Expenditure per pupil	4676
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-122

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)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

50

Number of questionnaires returned

36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	14			
My child is making good progress in school.	81	19			
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	28			3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	17	14	3	14
The teaching is good.	78	22			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	22	3		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	31	3	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	75	25			
The school is well led and managed.	83	17			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	20			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	22		3	3

Positive comments:

- Children always seem happy
- Children are never observed behaving badly
- Staff give good support to children with special needs
- Staff improve children's confidence by giving them a strong sense of achievement

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

53. Children are on course to well exceed the standards they are expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage.

54. They are extremely confident and assured in the nursery. They enter happily each morning or afternoon and settle immediately to the well-established routines. They hang up their coats, sign in on the board and select their name cards. Most acknowledge adults and visitors with a smile or a greeting and quickly seek out their special friends. All are interested and excited by the activities on offer. They choose very carefully, often discussing with their friends which activities to experience first. All are very confident to try new activities and are eager to take part. For example, children using screwdrivers for the first time worked with great enthusiasm to dismantle old telephones to see what was inside them. When children complete one activity, they start the next one without being directed by an adult. All handle equipment and materials with care.

55. Children are happy to make decisions for themselves, ask questions, and solve problems. Adults plan many activities that encourage children to think for themselves. For example, children using a sheet map of the outdoor area had to find different coloured pictures of Spot the Dog and record the appropriate colour on the map. The children explored the full extent of the outdoor area and maintained their concentration and enthusiasm until the task was complete. All worked with a sense of purpose and were engrossed throughout.

56. Children clearly understand what is right and wrong. They show high levels of self-control and their behaviour is excellent. All understand the rules of the nursery and remind visitors and others to keep to them. A child, for example, who saw an adult going outdoors reminded her that she would only be able to go on the playground and not on the grass if she did not put on a pair of wellington boots because the grass was muddy.

58. Excellent relationships with adults are created and children treat each other properly. They play well together, enjoy each other's company and take turns sensibly, often without an adult close by. All are encouraged to be kind, helpful and sensitive to the needs of others. For example, a child who had just joined a friend, showed great sensitivity when the model they were building together fell down. She apologised profusely, hugged him and helped to build it up again.

59. All staff expect children to show high levels of personal responsibility. Children choose their resources and select the tools and equipment necessary to complete activities. For example, some working without adults, making models from waste materials, chose boxes and paper, and then considered which tools they should use to join them together. After consideration, they selected glue, scissors and sellotape from the bank of tools on the shelves. On completing the activity, children cleared up spontaneously and put everything in its rightful place before moving on to the next activity.

60. The majority of children dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene effectively. At the theatre for example, children took off their coats and shoes without fuss and placed them on their seats until after their performance. In the nursery, children put on aprons as a matter of course when working with water or art materials and

hang them up when finished. Children who decide to work outside register their name card, put on coats and appropriate footwear before joining others outdoors.

61. The teaching in this area is very good overall and some lessons are excellent. Children make significant gains in independence, confidence and responsibility. An example of this very high standard of teaching was seen when all the children took part in a local dance festival, walked on to a stage in front of 300 people and performed an 'Indian Stick Dance' with confidence and enjoyment.

62. Detailed assessments and records are kept for all the children, including those with special educational needs. This information is used productively when planning activities and setting new challenges for them.

63. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is incorporated into the activities planned for all areas of learning. Adults provide a very good range of stimulating, exciting activities.

Communication, Language and Literacy

64. Most children arrive in school with language skills that are average when compared to children of a similar age. By the time they leave nursery, they are on course to achieve very high standards. This is because they are taught very well, have tremendous self confidence and they are so keen to learn. They are progressing rapidly through the 'Stepping Stones' which are the suggested stages of development that children move through as they work towards the Early Learning Goals.

65. Children have excellent listening skills. They listen attentively to adults as they share stories, understanding how important it is to pay attention if they are to contribute to the discussion that follows. A good example of this was seen during a group session when a teacher was reading the story 'Mrs Honey's Hat'. Although it was a large group, no one interrupted unless the adult asked them a question and then they answered confidently as they predicted what might happen next to the hat as different objects were stuck to it. It was clear from their responses that they had a very good understanding of the story and knew some of the protocols of conversation as they waited their turn to speak. Children's oral skills are of a similarly high standard. They talk confidently and clearly, often using complex sentences to explain to the listener exactly what they have been doing. 'I've finished playing with roamer so I must go back in now to do something else before snack time,' said one girl as she explained to her friend what she had been doing during the morning session.

66. Children enjoy using the writing areas that have been set up around the nursery. These include a role play area organized as a museum where children 'book in' customers and write out tickets for them. The majority can hold a pencil very well and write confidently as they pretend to take messages when they answer the telephone. A particular feature of their writing is their understanding of how the writing can be used for so many purposes. For example, they accept as a matter of course that they should write their own names on their pictures and then write lists of produce for the 'Farm Shop' that they have set up in the outside play area. They are given regular opportunities to practise their skills, which are valued and praised by all the adults who work with them

67. Children's reading skills are very good. They recognize their own names as they 'self register' at the start of each session and find their own name tags to 'sign out' as they choose to play outside. Print features prominently in the attractive displays which are used to encourage children to link the print they see with meaning. They are expected to read instructions. For example, children working with a programmable toy were able to follow the directions printed on a card. The adult working with them gave them prompts where necessary but they could pick

out some words they knew which helped them press the right buttons. Books feature highly within the school which provides an attractive literary environment. Children choose books to read spontaneously and the end of the session is used imaginatively to further improve their reading skills. Adults and children choose books and sit together on the floor 'reading' them. Staff model good reading styles and children appreciate how books are enjoyable and can give them lots of information. Children are very confident as they talk about stories that they have heard and explain why they like a particular one - "that's my favourite because my daddy reads it to me every night and I know how it ends".

68. Teaching is very good overall and occasionally it is excellent. Staff concentrate on improving children's language skills and take every opportunity to increase their vocabulary. They often do this during imaginative play where they take a full and active part, supporting children and offering ideas on how it could be improved. For example, one adult took on the role of the customer in the museum, talking to children about the exhibits and asking them questions. These were asked in such a way that all those in the group were able to make a contribution at a suitable level. Some of the 'museum' staff were confident and articulate and there was a danger that they would overwhelm some of the other children in the group by answering the questions for them. The adult working with them was alert to this possibility and was extremely skilful in ensuring that no one dominated. Everyone got a chance, with the higher attainers given tasks that would stretch and challenge them; for example, "do you think you could give me a guided tour and describe some of these exhibits?", which they managed with the air of experienced tour guides. Others, with less confidence, were asked to describe what they enjoyed most about the museum visit and, they too, achieved this successfully.

69. Children respond exceptionally well to the teaching. They stay actively involved and are able to sustain concentration for long periods despite being so young. A good example of this was seen with a boy producing his own 'leaflet'. He took a long time to decide what should be included and how it could be made. The teacher gave him ideas but he decided himself how it should be organized and would not move on to another activity until he was certain it was as good as he could possibly make it.

70. Children who have special educational needs are identified early on in the school year because the school has such effective screening systems. These children receive a very good level of skilled, adult support and they are given detailed individual programmes of work which give them the opportunity to make consistently good progress. Staff provide interesting activities and children experience success in what they do. Similarly, staff have identified those children who are higher attainers and they make sure the work they do and the questions they are asked are sufficiently challenging.

Mathematical Development

71. Children reach high standards in mathematical development. They are on course to well exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. This is despite a higher proportion of children arriving in school with special educational needs than when the school was previously inspected. Staff provide numerous opportunities throughout each session when children can practise and consolidate their counting skills. Most children can count to ten without adults helping them and they make good attempts at recognizing numbers; for example, as they choose from one to nine when setting a task for the roamer. Many can count higher than this. A key feature of children's mathematical success is their ability to apply what they know in practical situations. This was well illustrated during snack time when children were choosing pieces of fruit. They knew how many pieces they could select and made sure no one took too many. Some higher attainers within the group were able to work out simple sums to calculate how many pieces were left and how they could be shared around, making sure it was done fairly.

72. Children have a very good grasp of simple mathematical language as seen, for example, when they talk about quantities such as 'heavier' and 'lighter'. They learn about shapes and many are able to sort objects and put them in order using colour or shape to separate them. Some higher attainers can then work out how many objects they have collected. Children are very good at making comparisons and can recognise bigger and smaller objects around the nursery. For example, one group was playing in the 'Farm Shop'. When asked, they were able to put the potatoes they had collected into order of size. Once they had put them in order, they made good connections with other shopping 'experiences' that they wanted to describe to their classmates.

73. All children learn well and they make good progress in their mathematics. Those who are identified as having special educational needs make particularly good progress. This is because they receive a high level of skilled support and most achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans. The school works hard to ensure that they are able to experience the same sense of achievement as other children. Their work is very closely monitored and changed when it is necessary to adapt it. Individual records indicate that the progress they make is consistent throughout their time in nursery. A similar picture is found with higher attainers where staff set them sufficient levels of challenge so that no one finds the work too easy. They are given extension work that builds on what they already know and then makes them think harder. A good example of this was seen when children were creating patterns using carpet tiles. Their completed tasks became increasingly complex as more was asked of them.

74. Children behave very well and are keen to get on. They work well together, sharing and taking turns when necessary. When they are required to work together to complete their tasks, they do so sensibly. Their keenness and co-operation are significant factors in helping them reach the standards that they do.

75. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. This is higher than when the school was last inspected. Because the teaching is so successful, children learn more quickly and achieve higher standards. Teachers make good use of everyday opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills and link their planning to current topics. For example, an adult helped a group of children make some honey sandwiches. She made sure that a great deal of mathematical learning came from the activity. Children were able to recognise and name some of the mathematical shapes they saw as well as calculating how many sandwiches there would be each time the bread was cut. She made sure that each group member was able to answer questions at their own level. Children were confident enough to try to answer because they knew the adult was always going to help and encourage them to take a risk.

76. Planning is very good and much better than when the school was last inspected now that clear objectives are set for each lesson. This means that the pace of lessons is quicker. Staff regularly monitor how effective their teaching has been by checking on what children have learnt by the end of an activity. This enables them to plan the next phase of work more accurately and keeps children's learning purposeful.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

77. Children reach high standards in this area of learning. They are on course to well exceed the standards expected for children of this age at the end of the Foundation Stage.

78. Children have very good skills of observation. They are most successful at looking at materials, spotting similarities and differences and then trying to explain why something might have happened. For example, they describe why the leaves of a carnation might change colour if the stem of the flower is placed in coloured water. "That petal is going black because

the flower is sucking up that water. It will die without that water you know." They achieve similar success when they are trying to find out how things work. A very good example of this was seen when children managed to join wires to a battery in the correct order, completing a circuit so that a bulb lit up.

79. Children also make excellent use of construction materials to improve their skills in this area. A group built a 'marble run' taking great care to design it so that the marble would be able to run freely, gathering pace as it went. They discussed the task with their friends in detail, weighing up all the possible options before deciding how to proceed. Eventually, they completed a quite complex structure which matched their original design and worked exactly as planned.

80. Children's skills in using information and communication technology are well above average. They move objects around the computer screen showing good control and produced their own pictures and designed a paint program. Such is their ability in this area that many printed out their completed pictures and then saved their work to disk.

81. Because of the school's excellent work in this area, children have a detailed knowledge of their own and other cultures. They take part in festivals such as Christmas, Eid and Chinese New Year and learn about the similarities and differences in people's lives. Throughout the year, they build an increasing understanding of the community in which they live through an extensive programme of visits and the visitors who come into school to talk about the work they do.

82. Teaching in this area is very good because staff provide an outstanding range of interesting experiences that excite and challenge the children. Adults organise work exceptionally well, making sure that children stay focused and involved but also ensuring that children take decisions about their own learning. A really good example of this was seen when a small group of children played with a programmable toy. The adult carefully explained the task, encouraging the children to read the simple instructions with her help and then follow them independently. No one was allowed to dominate and, because of the excellent questioning technique, a particularly timid boy blossomed, gained in confidence and was able to complete the task unaided. Such was the adult's sensitivity and perseverance, the boy's self esteem grew and he left the activity full of excitement, eager to share what he had achieved with one of his friends. At the same time, a higher attaining child within the same group was given more difficult tasks and asked more searching questions so that nothing was too easy for her.

83. An important contributory factor to the high quality teaching is the very good planning of lessons. What children are expected to learn is made very clear and such is the detail of the evaluations that teachers make of their work, any gaps in children's learning are quickly spotted and changes are made to the next stage of their plans.

Physical development

84. The school provides a wide variety of activities, both indoors and out, to improve children's physical skills. All children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. The majority of the children are on course to be above the expected standards by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. This is similar to standards found at the time of the last inspection.

85. Children play out daily on the playground and garden area when the weather is fine. During outdoor activities, children control their movements confidently. They show great maturity using space safely and are aware of the space others need. Children experiment with different ways of moving. Many children run and chase each other energetically up and down

the grassy hill, adjusting speed and changing direction to avoid a collision. They creep through the wooden maze and curl up small in the willow bower. Most travel through the willow tunnel with ease, understanding that it is necessary to negotiate with others the direction in which to travel.

86. There is a very good range of climbing equipment which the children use with confidence. Most demonstrate very good skills of control and co-ordination as they climb up the steps, balance on the platform, crawl through a raised tunnel and slide down the other side with care and control. All enjoy repeating the activity they have mastered. Children pull and push a wheeled truck with passengers with increasing skill. They know how to vary the speed and direction to move the vehicle forwards and backwards and to stop safely.

87. The school planning and photographs indicate that children use the gym in the neighbouring High School on Friday each week to further develop physical skills such as balancing, climbing and games skills.

88. Children demonstrate very good skills, indoors, using a range of small equipment, tools and materials safely. They correctly hold a range of appropriate writing and drawing tools, scissors and glue and take great care to use hammers and nails carefully as demonstrated by the adults. They understand how to manipulate some quite challenging plastic link construction kits. At the computer station, children control the mouse effectively to move images around the screen.

89. The quality of the teaching is very good overall and some of it is excellent. This is because adults expect the most from the children and carefully focus on the skill to be developed. A good example of this was seen when children working with hammers and nails were shown how to hold the tools correctly and manipulate them with greater expertise to join pieces of wood together. The adult stayed close by to support, encourage and develop the skill. With her encouragement, they repeated the task until they had mastered the technique. Staff help children to think about their work and encouraged them to try hard to improve. Where the teaching is excellent, children achieve very highly. This was seen when teachers inspired children to move with confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination when dancing for a large audience.

90. Adults carefully assess and record children's achievements. This knowledge is always used to plan new challenges for them or to strengthen newly acquired skills.

91. All children take very good care of resources when they are using them and willingly clear them away when they have finished working with them. An example of this was seen when children working with scissors, pencils and glue carefully placed them back on the shelf so that the next children joining the activity could access them easily.

Creative Development

92. The majority of children are on course to exceed the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. The children make very good progress in expressing their feelings in creative activities such as painting, modelling, role-play and music making. Children make rapid progress and achieve highly in performing dance.

93. There is very good provision throughout the nursery to support children's creative development. All have access to a wide range of stimulating experiences both indoors and out. All children have free access to paint and a variety of sizes of paper during the session. They draw, paint and make models with enthusiasm. Most children use scissors, brushes, spatulas and glue with confidence as they select, cut and stick boxes together to make models of houses and machines.

94. Throughout all activities, adults encourage children to explore colour, develop their observational skills and describe the texture of things. Children are extremely confident and select and consider different pieces of fabric to make a collage. All could describe the texture and many showed delight and satisfaction as they found some with gold and silver thread. Similarly, children playing with large coloured feathers held them near their faces, felt the softness and shared this experience with others.

95. All children, including those with special educational needs, take part happily in role play based on their own first hand experiences. In the indoor role-play area, the 'museum,' children mirror the mannerisms and characteristics of the adults who had escorted them around the Almonry Museum in Evesham. Children play with great enthusiasm and co-operation in this area, deciding when the museum is open, for example, and issuing tickets and providing brochures. All visitors to the 'museum' are escorted around the area and the items of interest pointed out. Children ensure that solemn music is played on the tape recorder to give the authentic atmosphere.

96. Music is used to good effect in the nursery. In group time, children sing traditional songs such as 'Wind the Bobbin Up.' All are confident in handling a good range of musical instruments. A child striking the suspended metal panel got others to listen as she told them it sounded like a church bell. Children can match movements to music. For example, children performing at a dance festival moved rhythmically to Indian music when dancing an Indian Stick Dance. All could follow a series of movements as they tapped a rhythm with their decorated sticks and moved backwards and forwards in a circle in time to the music.

97. Most teaching is very good and some is excellent. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They maintain a good balance between guiding, supporting and encouraging them to explore and develop their skills independently. For example, a child making a collage with tissue paper put a piece of yellow tissue over the red. She told others that it now looked orange. The adult gave children time to consider this and then supported the children as they experimented and stated their preference for individual colours. Children learn from direct experience which successfully reinforces their understanding. In the role-play areas, adults are on hand to support the play or intervene sensitively if required. For example, children playing in the 'museum' welcomed the adult into the play and careful discussion between the adult and children introduced new vocabulary, extended the play and children's confidence and enjoyment were increased.

98. Creative development is used very well to help children develop independent skills. Large banks of resources are easily accessible to all children, for example, and they take time selecting and choosing appropriate items to put on their models. There is a wide range of resources available to support all art and craft activities and the role-play areas both indoors and out.