

INSPECTION REPORT

TAYWOOD NURSERY SCHOOL

BURNLEY

LEA area: LANCASHIRE

Unique reference number: 133372

Headteacher: Christine Lawless

Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett
1569

Dates of inspection: Monday 27th May – Tuesday 28th May 2002

Inspection number: 245803

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:	Tay Street Burnley
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Appropriate authority:	Lancashire
Name of chair of governors:	Darren Ashworth
Date of previous inspection:	None

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
OIN 1569	MICHAEL HEWLETT	Registered inspector	Communication, Language and Literacy	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
			Mathematical development	
			Knowledge and Understanding of the World	
			English as an additional language	
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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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Taywood is an average sized nursery school situated in the Barclay ward of Burnley. The school opened in August 2001 following the amalgamation of Howard Street and Accrington Road nursery schools. It shares the site with Elm Tree Family Support Service. There are 80 children on roll, aged between three and four years old, of whom 50 are girls and 30 are boys. They all attend part time. The majority of children live in the immediate area where there are high levels of deprivation within the local community. The children are taught by three teachers, including the headteacher. One of the teachers works part time. In addition, there are three full time nursery nurses. Thirteen per cent of the children have been identified as having special educational needs, with the majority having speech and communication difficulties. A smaller number, eight per cent, are learning English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry to school varies considerably but is well below average overall. This is particularly true of their communication and numeracy skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

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

What the school does well

- Children make very good progress and achieve very well
- Teaching is good, planning of work and its evaluation is very good
- Leadership of the headteacher is very good
- Relationships are very good and the school takes very good care of the children
- It establishes a positive atmosphere for learning and makes very good provision for children's personal development
- Links with the community and partnership with parents are very good

What could be improved

- Learning opportunities are occasionally missed because some activities go on too long while the pace of others is too fast

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first time that Taywood nursery has been inspected.

STANDARDS

Children follow the Foundation Stage curriculum which is recommended for both nursery and reception classes. Their early progress through the different stages known as 'stepping stones' indicates the majority are on course towards achieving national standards. These are known as the Early Learning Goals which cover the areas of literacy, numeracy, personal development, and knowledge and understanding of the world as well as children's physical and creative development. Children are expected to reach these goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The standards children reach represent very good achievement because most of them arrive in

school with standards that are well below average for their age. As a result of the good teaching they receive, most children become very confident and independent. Children achieve so well because they are enthusiastic, behave very well and are given work that suits their needs and individual interests. All groups of children make similar rates of progress. For example, children identified as having special educational needs are given extra support and a detailed plan that sets out clearly what targets staff want them to achieve. A small proportion of children are learning English as an additional language. They make rapid progress because staff focus on their language skills and give them many opportunities to practise and consolidate what they have learned. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

CHILDREN’S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children really engage in all the activities.
Behaviour	Very good. Children understand the rules and follow them well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships flourish throughout the school. Children become independent and confident about making choices.
Attendance	Average

Children like coming to school and join in with great enthusiasm. They are very well behaved and relate well to adults and their peers. They become increasingly self-confident and embrace new experiences happily.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	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 and, often, it is very good. None was judged to be unsatisfactory. Good quality teaching is seen across all areas of the curriculum. The small teaching groups and the way in which the nursery is organised help staff to get to know the children well and encourages them to be independent. Staff expect a lot from the children and they respond accordingly. A key feature of the teaching is the way in which adults expect children to think for themselves and make choices. This results in children who have high self esteem and good levels of confidence. Improving children’s language skills is an agreed priority in the school and successful teaching helps achieve this goal. The teaching is good because the planning is detailed and thorough, work set and questions asked are demanding and relationships are very good. Only occasionally does the teaching fall below these high standards even though it is still satisfactory. This happens when the activity lasts too long and some children lose interest and when the adult working with a group moves an activity on too quickly, not allowing the group members to participate. At these times, learning opportunities are missed. On most occasions, staff work hard to ensure that no individual or groups are left out, so that the particular needs of higher attainers or those with learning difficulties are well supported as staff arrange their work at the correct level. The small proportion of children learning English as an additional language do well within this attractive environment where improving their language skills is given such a high priority by all staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The nursery curriculum is broad and balanced with a strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development and on the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. It prepares children well for the next stage of their education. Curriculum planning is very good.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision. Children's individual needs are quickly assessed and planned for. Sensitive support and good teaching enable children to achieve very well and make very good progress.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Very good. The children make very good progress and they are encouraged and supported by all the staff. The school makes sure that children experience the full range of activities.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for children's personal development. Early experiences in the development of spiritual, moral social and cultural aspects are sensitively encouraged through well-planned activities and careful explanation.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good. Staff take very good care of the children. They understand their needs and set them challenging tasks. Assessment procedures are very effective.

The school establishes very good communication with parents and encourages them to participate in the life of the school and their children's education. Very strong community links support this process.

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 very good and the clear educational direction she has set is understood by all. Staff work effectively together as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has only recently been established, but already it is having a positive impact on what the school achieves. Individual governors visit regularly, know the strengths and weaknesses and have a very good understanding of the issues that the school has to face.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has set up systems to measure its effectiveness and to demonstrate what value it has added for the children.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school is careful to obtain best value when spending its money and organizes its resources well.

Staffing levels and accommodation are good. Resources for learning are very good and they are very well organised so that children can choose for themselves. The school tries to get 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"> • Children make good progress • Teaching is good and children are taught to respect and care for others • Children enjoy coming to school and they behave very well • They are encouraged to be independent • The recent amalgamation has not affected their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents felt that they were not given enough information about how well their children were doing. • A small number felt there was an insufficient range of activities outside of lessons and that their children did not get enough work to do at home

Inspection findings agree with the parents’ overwhelmingly positive views. Parents are very supportive and a good dialogue exists between school and home. The school provides a good amount of information for parents, both before the children arrive and whilst they are in school. 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 well below what might be expected from most three year olds.
2. They make very good progress during their time at Taywood nursery. The majority are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals.
3. Children achieve very well because they are very keen to learn, experience an exciting, well organized curriculum and are taught well. They are encouraged to be independent and, as a result, often take responsibility for their own learning.
4. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Their growing confidence is demonstrated when children leave their parents happily and settle into the routine of the school day. They hang up their coats; register their name card and hurry to join the activities. They work together in a friendly, supportive manner showing respect for each other, adults and visitors. All respond well to adults, follow instructions and listen to what they are told. Most children make sensible choices from the range of activities available, play well together, share and take turns. Most work contentedly individually, in pairs and in small groups for activities and story. Children handle equipment and materials with care. Children know where everything belongs and most clear away effectively at the end of activities. Behaviour throughout the nursery is very good. Children are sensitive to the needs of others and show obvious pleasure in friends' successes as well as their own.
5. Children make very good progress in all aspects of their literacy development. Their ability to listen carefully and follow instructions is a particularly strong feature. They enjoy taking messages and many understand some of the protocols of discussion, for example waiting for others to finish their contribution before joining in. Most choose to look at books independently and make good links between the words and pictures they see and the stories they know. Many children make good attempts at writing their own name, often labelling their pictures without being asked.
6. Children's progress in developing their mathematical skills is similarly very good. Counting skills are regularly practised. They take every opportunity to use these skills in practice as, for example, they count how many laps they have ridden on their bikes or how high the bricks need to be to make their building stable. Many talk about size, shape and pattern; for example, as they measure the water they are pouring into different sized containers.
7. Very good progress is made in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They are confident enough to discuss their observations and predict what might happen to liquids when they are mixed; for example, when food colouring is added to water. Their skills in using information and communications technology are particularly well developed. Most children independently select programs on the computer, use the mouse well and print out their finished work.
8. Most children confidently handle small tools such as pencils, scissors, paintbrushes, and glue sticks to make a 'princess puppet' or to make a golden collage for the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Outdoors, they pedal and steer tricycles, and pull and push 'The Royal Carriage', negotiating the marked pathway with care. Children have a good awareness of space as they

follow the arrows and manoeuvre their vehicles to ensure they do not collide. Some confident children can climb up a frame, crawl through a tunnel and slide down the other side.

9. Children make good progress in creative development because the wide range of stimulating experiences provided by the staff extends and develops their creative skills. They explore and make good use of their imagination by using a variety of materials such as paint, dough and collage. Children play in the 'royal palace' with great eagerness and enthusiasm, taking the part of the Queen or princes and princesses. All children enjoy singing songs and rhymes from memory.

10. All groups of children make very good gains in their learning. Children who have special educational needs are identified early and are given a wide range of interesting and challenging tasks which meet their individual needs and requirements. Those who are learning English as an additional language are making progress at a similar rate. Staff make good provision for them by ensuring they are able to take part in the full curriculum range and that every chance is taken to practise their language skills. 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 very well catered for. Staff make sure that work is carefully planned at just the right level so that these children are continually challenged.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Children have very good attitudes to learning and participate fully in the many interesting activities planned by staff. They really look forward to coming to school and this helps them to make the most of the time they spend there. Children are equally content to work with an adult, alongside their peers or to spend time alone, absorbed in a self-chosen task. For example, one girl 'went to work in the office'. She decided to attach a number of paper clips to the top of an old envelope so that it 'would close again'. She stood for a long time, sliding the clips onto the envelope and asked an adult to 'look after them for me' when she needed to leave the room for a few moments. She returned happily to her task and completed it diligently.

12. Standards of behaviour are very good in all areas of the school; this is a good-natured and orderly community. Children have a clear understanding of what they may and may not do and they follow the simple rules very well. They are beginning to understand their place in the school community and many work harmoniously in pairs and groups. They respond very well to the trust placed in them by adults, conscientiously finding other children who have not had their snack, for example. They learn, through circle times and by watching the very good role models offered by adults in the school, to listen to other people when they are speaking and to value their opinions.

13. Very good relationships flourish between all members of the school community and this creates a happy and productive learning environment. Adults are very adept at introducing opportunities for children to talk about their home experiences while participating in tasks and this helps to cement good communication. It also enables staff to know children even better. For instance, during a baking activity, children talked about how they used baking utensils at home – "I even use them in the bath – I splash them", smiled one girl to which a boy replied "I'm not allowed them in the bath – they make too much mess". The adult made a diplomatic response to both children and they carried on happily with their whisking. Children are kind to each other, offering help and automatically sharing resources such as the dressing up clothes.

14. Children's personal development is also very good; they are becoming increasingly independent and are able to make choices for themselves. They are very keen to participate in

any new activities and can apply knowledge they have learned at home to tasks they undertake in school. Children making Jubilee cakes, for example, knew that the oven was hot and that they had to be very careful not to touch it, as it would burn them. A particular strength of many children at the school is the confident manner in which they approach adults and engage them in conversation. One girl in the dressing up corner took great delight in showing how all her jewellery matched and talked for some time about which pieces she liked best. Children feel very secure in this cheery learning environment and they demonstrate this regularly by asking questions about things they do not know. They then take that information and incorporate it in their play. They are able to apply rules to what they are doing, without reference to an adult. One girl wanted to show her friend what she was doing. She eventually spotted her over at the baking table – “Oh, I can’t go over there in this (a princess dress) because it will get messy.” Children respond very well to adults’ requests for them to run errands – they find particular children and tell them to go for their snack. They choose their cups and snacks independently and carefully pour their own drinks from the large jugs. They look after their own personal hygiene very well and many go to wash their hands without being told.

15. Levels of attendance are satisfactory and have improved over the last twelve months. Most children are brought to school on time and there is a punctual start to sessions.

HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. Staff provide children with an extensive range of exciting activities which ensures that they experience the full range of the Foundation Stage curriculum and encourages them to be independent.

17. Most children arrive in school with limited abilities to listen attentively or speak confidently. Therefore, all staff focus on developing these skills in activities they plan across all the areas of learning. They build children’s confidence and self esteem, encouraging them to take a risk and have a go. A good example of this happening was seen during a circle time activity. A group of children sat with an adult who placed a series of objects in front of them. All the objects were familiar to the children because they had played with them earlier in the role play area. They listened carefully to the instructions because they knew this was important and wanted to succeed. The adult set the questions she asked at just the right degree of difficulty, so the varying needs of the group members, including those new to the school and those with little English, were met. Each child was able to make a contribution that ranged from one word that showed they recognised the flag to those who were able to use much more complex language, describing why the crown had been included in this set of objects. “It’s because we are having a party for the Queen and that is what she wears sometimes” As a result of such sensitive teaching, children gained in confidence and made gains in improving their language skills.

18. Another feature of the successful teaching found throughout the nursery is the good level of subject knowledge that staff have. On most occasions, they plan lessons that move at just the right pace so that children stay interested throughout. During a baking activity, the adult organized the session very effectively. She made sure the correct utensils were available and that each member of the group was able to contribute in a practical way. “Just tell me what do we need to do with these ingredients? How many spoonfuls are we likely to need?” were among the questions she asked to make sure the children fully understood what they were doing. The activity grabbed the children’s interest because they were given lots of opportunities to predict what might happen and check this out by closely observing. “That mixture is really sticky, that flour has changed”, said one of the group as they mixed the ingredients. The adult carefully moved the conversation on to talk about how the mixture might change once it went into the oven. Some of the children remembered how cakes had emerged from the oven on a previous occasion. They were able to explain some of the

differences they remembered, such as “it wasn’t wet any more and it tasted much nicer than the mixture”. The adult then seized the opportunity to talk about other foods that children enjoyed and sort out which ones needed to be cooked before they could be eaten and why.

19. A small number of the children demonstrate challenging patterns of behaviour and staff manage them very well. They organize activities that keep them interested and actively stimulated. Not only do they behave well but also the effectiveness of the teaching styles and the challenges set for them make sure they make good gains in their learning during their time at Taywood.

20. In the best lessons, adults make good links across the curriculum, to improve children’s skills. For example, in an outdoor play activity, children were counting the laps they completed while riding bikes or scooters around the marked track. Another group that was playing basketball was keen to know who was winning. The adult encouraged them to calculate how many baskets they had each scored and then work out the differences between them.

21. It is only on a few occasions that the quality of the teaching does not meet these standards, although it is still satisfactory. In some lessons, the adult working with the group pushed the children on too quickly so that they did not get enough opportunities to respond to the questions that she asked. Too many ideas were introduced at once and whilst they made gains in their learning, the chance to talk about their own family and friends during this group activity was missed. On another occasion, a large group activity involved children playing musical instruments. It started really well with all the children enjoying the tasks and learning about the sounds that could be made. Unfortunately, it went on too long and a small number became restless. This slowed the rate of progress they were able to make.

22. All staff make very good use of resources to support their teaching. This is particularly true of the way in which furniture is carefully organized and labelled. Staff have made great efforts to ensure that children become as independent as they possibly can in as short a time as possible. Children select their own resources, know how to use them and understand just how important it is to clear away when they have finished. During a successful creative activity, children chose their own materials and decided which colours and brushes they wanted to use. The adult encouraged them to explain their selection and valued their reasoning, “That’s a really good idea, do you think it will make an attractive pattern?” before offering suggestions on ways that they might improve their work. Such was children’s confidence and independence, they carefully considered the suggestions before making their own decision. When the activity was completed, all the group members took considerable pride in tidying away their equipment.

23. Staff organize a detailed programme of work for children who have special educational needs. It sets out targets for them to work towards. They use these plans when organizing activities and skillfully ensure that no one is left out. They set tasks which build children’s confidence and encourage them to try new things. For example, during a small group activity an adult worked with two children, trying to improve their language skills. Both children lacked confidence but the adult showed great patience as she talked about familiar objects and showed them pictures. They soon began to name the objects, recognizing the pattern of letter sounds that they had in common. “That’s a snake,” said one girl excitedly as she spotted the emerging pattern, “and I know some other words that start the same”.

24. Children learning English as an additional language are very well supported. Most are new to English but the skill of the staff is in the way they fully involve them in all the lessons. This means that children’s confidence improves as well as their language skills because they have the chance to practise and consolidate what they have learned with their classmates.

25. Higher attainers are equally well supported by the teaching because they are given tasks that stretch them and make them think. These extension tasks are built into the planning so that staff have materials ready to extend children's learning where necessary.

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

26. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the children are good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and all staff place a strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development and on the development of their literacy and numeracy skills across the whole curriculum. It prepares children well for the next stage of their education.

27. Curriculum planning is very good. All staff, including teachers, nursery nurses and support nursery nurses are involved in planning the curriculum and there is a good balance of experiences and activities. The current curriculum is linked to the topic of 'The Queen's Golden Jubilee.' However, staff also take notice of children's special interests and their ideas have formed a mini theme of 'The World Cup' to run along side the current topic. Termly, weekly and daily planning are prepared in detail, and are very helpful to the teaching and learning. The school has effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. These are carefully planned so that they are included throughout the activities the children undertake. Evaluation of the planning and the children's work is very good. Lesson plans are evaluated daily and any adjustments are made for the following day. At weekly planning meetings, the whole week's planning is evaluated in depth and recorded. This information is effectively used to consider 'what next for the children' before planning the following week's work and activities.

28. The school assesses children when they enter the nursery. This useful information about what children know and can do in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and numeracy is being used well to plan suitable activities and new challenges for them. Links between assessment and planning are firmly established. Staff regularly assess children in all areas of learning and this useful information and the children's records, are used productively when planning activities at the correct level for the children involved. Adults also know the children well and intuitively ensure the needs of all children are taken into account when supporting activities.

29. The school provides a good balance between activities led by adults and those which children choose for themselves. It takes considerable care over how the learning activities are presented to the children. The organization of the learning areas is very effective. All are well equipped with suitable materials which encourages children to choose carefully from the wide bank of resources and to select the tools necessary for their tasks. This way of working supports and encourages children to be confident and self sufficient when completing many tasks. Good provision is made for children to play purposefully, work creatively and talk to other children and adults working with them.

30. Throughout the sessions, children are provided with many opportunities to make choices, take decisions and develop as independent learners. They are regularly monitored as they move around the activities so that their involvement and progress, in all areas, is recorded. This ensures that some children who may initially only visit a narrow group of activities, such as creative activities, are guided by an adult to any areas they have missed.

31. The school makes good use of a range of visits to enhance the children's learning opportunities. For example, following a visit to Rockwater Bird Sanctuary, children studied photographs of the birds and then made a book containing detailed observational paintings of the birds they had seen there. Similarly, children who had enjoyed the story of 'The Green

Queen', visited a charity shop to find articles to support the dramatisation of the story. The school has a range of visitors to support and extend children's learning. For example, a vet came to school and brought a dog with him. This stimulated many questions and enabled children who did not have a pet at home to experience the joy and responsibility of owning a pet.

32. This very good partnership ensures that children and families with very different backgrounds and experiences are able to benefit from the educational opportunities on offer. Mums to be, single parents, children from 0-5 years, families with hearing impaired children are all included in the joint ventures run by the centre and the school. Some activities are so popular that they overflow into the school building from the centre. Parents who attend the centre become involved in projects that benefit the school such as the cart made recently under the supervision of the father of one of the children. By the time children start at the school, they are familiar with the surroundings and settle very quickly into school routines. This helps them to make significant progress very quickly, in both their personal and academic development.

33. Overall, the school makes very good provision for children's personal development.

34. The provision for children's social and moral development is very good. All adults provide good role models and encourage honesty, fairness, respect and care for others. They teach the children to be courteous and to have good manners. The school is successful in helping children to understand the difference between right and wrong. All members of staff are skilled at promoting good behaviour, using praise and 'stickers' readily to reward good behaviour and effort. Adults know children well and if a child starts to misbehave there is early intervention. For example, a child who had been flicking soap in the cloakroom was talked to by a member of staff, encouraged to say he was sorry and then directed to a worthwhile activity. All children understand the nursery rules and know they are applied consistently. Children are encouraged to work together in a friendly and supportive environment. During role play in the 'Queen's Palace' for example, the adult ensured all children took part in the play. She encouraged them to work together amicably and to take turns with 'crowns' and 'tiaras' and supported both boys and girls when they wished to be soldiers and wear the 'busbies'. The nursery gives children numerous opportunities to take responsibility, such as choosing which activities they will develop and which curriculum area they will work in. All are encouraged and expected to tidy up and put things away at the end of activities.

35. The provision for children's spiritual development is of a similarly high standard. Small group sessions provide regular opportunities for children to talk about their experiences and feelings. For example, children listening to a story about a queen thought that she was a happy queen. They then talked at great length about what made them happy. Children are also sensitive to the feelings of others. An adult who had nearly lost her voice the previous day, was asked by children if she was feeling better today. Adults use spontaneous moments well to encourage an awareness of the world around them. A group of children working at the 'Colour Display' put on different coloured sunglasses and looked around the nursery. They looked in amazement, as everything turned pink. An adult working nearby joined them and listened carefully as they described what they could see. She ensured that all the children in the group were given time to observe the phenomena. Similarly, children shaking and turning kaleidoscopes were encouraged to watch the different patterns emerging and to share this experience with a friend.

36. Provision for children's cultural development is also very good. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn about their own culture as well as developing some knowledge of other cultures. Recent work, for example, on the mini topic 'World Football' has been skilfully planned and developed to incorporate an awareness of flags from all the

different countries. Many children contributed to the display and some could identify the flag of their own country. Children are also helped to reflect on their own culture as well as developing a knowledge of other cultures through a wide range of books, listening to traditional stories and learning rhymes such as 'Hickory Dickory Dock' and 'Hot Cross Buns'. They celebrate some festivals from different world faiths, such as Christmas and Easter, Eid, and the Chinese New Year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Standards of pastoral care are very high and ensure that children learn in a safe and welcoming environment.

38. Very effective procedures are in place to ensure the health, safety and general well-being of the children. When the Elm Tree Family Support Service was first housed on the school site, the headteacher went to considerable lengths to ensure that security issues were carefully considered and addressed. Both establishments benefit from this rigorous approach and all health and safety issues are speedily addressed. Staff are trained in first aid and are given specific training to meet the welfare needs of any individual children with medical problems. Accidents are carefully logged and parents are notified about any concerns.

39. Child protection issues are very well addressed; one of the teachers is designated responsible for this area and she liaises well with all the adults to ensure they have the most up to date information available. Local guidelines are followed. Effective links are maintained with outside support agencies and the adjoining ETFSS ensures that close dialogue can take place about any concerns among staff. This enables very effective communication to take place upon children's transfer into school.

40. Staff are very consistent in their expectations of children's behaviour and this ensures that very high standards are maintained. Constant praise and encouragement, coupled with ideas such as circle time, ensure that children feel valued and heard by adults each day. Parents state that they feel behaviour is very good in the school.

41. There are effective systems for monitoring children's attendance and punctuality. The headteacher puts great emphasis on these aspects when children first join the school. Until recently, the school has had spare places but now, the headteacher can underline just how important it is for each child to attend regularly and places are reallocated in the event of constant, unexplained absence.

42. Support for children with special educational needs and for the few children who speak a language other than English as their mother tongue, is very good. Individual education plans are drawn up in conjunction with parents and these are used to support planning for children in lessons. Here too, the close links with the neighbouring ETFSS ensures that staff have a good knowledge of any problems before children start in school as they are already known to their colleagues.

43. Assessment procedures are very effective; they are detailed and ensure children make consistent progress during their time in school. Target setting meetings group children for numeracy activities in some terms and literacy in others. Equally effective support and guidance is offered by adults to promote children's personal development and this is a particularly successful aspect of the school's provision. Staff are very skilful in the way they question children in order to extend their knowledge and understanding in particular areas and this helps them to make the best possible progress in an extremely positive atmosphere.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents make very positive comments overall about the school. In particular, they feel behaviour is good and that staff are very easy to approach with any problems.

45. The headteacher and staff establish very good communication with parents and this helps them to feel involved in the school and in what their children are learning. A significant factor in cementing such good relationships with parents is the Elm Tree Family Support Service (ETFSS) which shares the building. Parents first come to the support centre and, because liaison is so close between staff, they are introduced to the nursery at a very early stage in their child's life. This means that by the time children are ready to start at the school, parents have a good insight into the way the nursery operates and what they can expect for their children. The school has a clear aim to involve parents in the life of the school.

46. Regular written information is sent to parents and this provides them with a clear picture of what is happening in school. Governing body minutes and reports are readily available and staff are easy to meet if parents have questions to ask. Commendably, written information is also communicated verbally to make certain that all parents understand what is happening. Parent evaluations are given out at the end of the year so that staff receive more feedback about what parents value most in the school's provision. This information helps to amend plans for the following year.

47. The school makes every effort to keep parents well informed about the progress their children make. Daily, informal contact is often made where particular events are discussed with parents and there are also regular, more formal opportunities for parents to meet with staff and talk about what their children are doing. Informative, end of year, written reports are also given to parents and, along with their individual record of achievement, these provide a very detailed evaluation of how much progress a child has made during their time in school.

48. Parents make a good contribution to the life of the school and to their children's learning. Parents are very successful at fundraising for the school and some also help to make additional learning resources for children to use at home, such as the popular 'nursery rhyme boxes'. These, along with other lending schemes, allow parents to support their children's learning at home. A good number of parents also make the most of the varied courses and adult education programmes offered jointly by the school and the ETFSS. A particularly useful programme guides parents through the six areas of learning studied by their children and gives them a broad overview of what each area covers and how they can reinforce this learning themselves.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The school has faced enormous challenges during this first year of its existence following the amalgamation. The bringing together of staff from different schools and ensuring there is a whole school outlook on what is provided have required strong, effective as well as sensitive leadership. The headteacher has demonstrated all of these qualities and this has enabled the transition period to run smoothly. She has a clear understanding of what she wants to achieve within the school and this vision is shared by colleagues working with her. Everyone has a chance to contribute to any debate and there is already a whole school approach to everything they do, even though the school is less than a year old. Helping children to become independent and achieve as much as they can are key aims of the school. The effective leadership of the headteacher helps to ensure that these aims are delivered in practice.

50. The school is very well managed and has set up good systems to check on children's progress and to make sure that what has been agreed by staff in the planning of work actually happens in the classroom. For example, regular evaluations are undertaken which measure

how successful lessons have been. When gaps are identified, they are quickly plugged so that, in nearly all activities, good use is made of the time available. This is because staff are so keen to improve their practice. For example, they discovered that snack time was becoming repetitive and some children were taking too long, missing out on other important aspects of their work. Staff improved the organization so that less time was spent eating snacks each day and, as a result, the sessions have become more productive. Children do not miss out because the social gathering and sharing of news is incorporated elsewhere during the session.

51. Performance management systems are in place and they are working well because they have been adapted to meet the needs of the nursery school.

52. Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the school's plans and this results in a strong sense of teamwork where nursery nurses are viewed as valued partners. An example of this is found in the way in which everyone contributes to decisions on the school's current priorities. These are then summarized in the school development plan. This is a good document which provides a realistic picture of how the school will progress over the year and what its priorities will be. It sets out targets for improvement and describes what resources will be needed.

53. The Governing Body has only just been appointed but is already having a positive effect on the school. Individual governors visit regularly and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are very supportive at this early stage in the school's history and have worked successfully with parents to clarify issues. The chair has a detailed knowledge of the school's priorities and has taken practical steps to allay any parental concerns following the amalgamation. For example, working with the headteacher, he was able to explain why the arrangements for group time were being changed. Parents told the inspectors how much they valued this personal contact. Because the school does not have a delegated budget, the local education authority has overall legal responsibility. It fulfils all its statutory responsibilities.

54. Good progress has been made in monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school. The headteacher has a clear overview of how successful teaching is and how much children have learned following an activity. This is has identified some weaknesses in the teaching, such as questioning techniques and making the most of learning opportunities. There are already plans in place to address these issues and the school's commitment to continuing staff development has been recognized through achieving the 'Investors in People' award.

55. Staff are beginning to gather data which will enable 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. Although still not one year old, the quality of the school's data and the evaluations it makes of its own work are considerable strengths.

56. Staffing levels are good and the funds allocated to support children who have special needs and those learning English as an additional language are very well used. All staff work closely together to ensure children's individual needs are known and acted upon. Children who are in these categories receive very good levels of support that allow them to experience the full curriculum range. The school has an up to date policy which describes how it will promote racial equality. The aims and principles set out in this guidance seem to be happening within the school.

57. The school is very well resourced. This has been helped by careful selection of the best resources from the two amalgamating schools. They are imaginatively used and carefully organised so that children can choose for themselves, helping them to become more independent. This has been a priority of the school's work with furniture and equipment to be used incorporated in the school's planning. 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.

58. Staff have worked hard to make the classroom into an attractive learning environment where children's work and achievements are celebrated. The outdoor play provision is good and is thoughtfully planned. Work on improving this area still further was halted while decisions on the future of the school were being made.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Check that learning opportunities are not missed by:
 - ensuring that staff monitor the pace of their lessons, making sure they do not talk too quickly and give regular opportunities for children to contribute at their own level.
 - reviewing the length of some lessons so that they do not last too long and engaging those children who become disinterested and restless.
(*paragraphs 21,72,92*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed

36

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	23	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	64	19	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 eight 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)	80
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	10

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002 nb the school opened August 2001
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	£
Total income	171424
Total expenditure	171424
Expenditure per pupil	4286
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
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	80
Number of questionnaires returned	25

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	12	4		
My child is making good progress in school.	68	20	8		
Behaviour in the school is good.	80	20			
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	28	4	8	8
The teaching is good.	88	8			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	24	16		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	32			4
The school works closely with parents.	72	24			
The school is well led and managed.	72	20			4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	20			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	12			12

Not all questions received a response so some rows do not add up to one hundred

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

59. When children start at the nursery they show standards in personal, social and emotional development that are often well below average for their age. The teaching and development of skills are thus given a very high priority and staff make sure they are well promoted in everything the children do. High expectations by all adults ensure that children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language also make very good progress due to the good support they receive from adults. Attainment for the vast majority of children in personal, social and emotional development is on course to reach the level expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

60. Staff have successfully created a happy, purposeful atmosphere where children settle quickly into the routines of the school. Children's growing confidence is demonstrated well when, at the start of the session they hang up their coats, register their name card and hurry to join the activities in the nursery. All readily say good-bye to their parents and carers, greeting both adults and other children with pleasure. Some have special friends and welcome others to come and join them in the activities they have chosen. They enjoy each other's company and children play well together. They understand that only a certain number of children may work in some areas and abide by the rules. All share, take turns and work in a friendly supportive manner. This was demonstrated when a group of children working in 'The Palace' carefully negotiated with each other who would sit on the throne and for how long. All felt the decision was fair and purposeful play ensued.

61. Adults are good role models and constantly reinforce good work habits. Each day, children select the activities they will undertake and most work with a sense of purpose, persevere and concentrate on their work. When they complete one activity they start the next one without being directed by an adult. The majority work contentedly individually, in pairs and in small or large groups for activities and stories. Children usually show respect for each other. During group time, for example, they listen to what their friends have to say and wait to have their turn. Children show obvious pleasure in friends' successes as well as their own. This was seen when individual children correctly identified objects which had been removed from a tray and were applauded spontaneously by some of the other children in the group.

62. The children's behaviour throughout the nursery is very good. This is due to the high expectations of all adults and the good response from the children. All understand the rules of the nursery and, with adult help, recognise the difference between right and wrong. The staff are skilful at reinforcing this in a positive way. Children learn to control their feelings; most are beginning to understand the impact of their actions on others. For example, a child who accidentally spilt glue on another child's name card was most upset and anxious that an adult would help him put it right. They talked about it, washed the card clean and he said he was sorry.

63. Children's confidence and independence is being developed well. Most children respond well to the responsibilities given to them. Resources for the majority of the areas of learning are well organised and children know where everything belongs. They enjoy selecting resources and tools for activities and routinely replace them on the shelves when they have finished using them. However, some resources for music are less well organized. Musical

instruments for group work are placed in a large tidy box and, at the start of a lesson, all children rush to take an instrument at the same time.

64. Children are confident in the nursery routines. They know when to stop and listen to adults and the majority clear away sensibly and thoroughly before going outdoors. At snack time, most of the children, confidently pour their own drink and clear away after themselves. When working with water or art materials children automatically put on aprons, and hang them up when they have finished. Most move around the nursery sensibly and remember to wash their hands after visiting the toilet.

65. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is good. In the best lessons, teachers and nursery nurses have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They have very good relationships with the children and are well aware of their needs. All are patient and kind with the children and give them every opportunity to talk about the activity they are working at. A good example of this was seen when an adult working with a group of children who were baking cakes encouraged them to tell others what they were doing. She listened carefully to the children's comments and gave ready praise and encouragement. All grew in self-esteem. A boy, for example, leaving the activity said with pride "I'm learning".

66. Personal, social and emotional development is integrated into activities planned for all areas of learning. Careful assessments note children's progress so individual needs for support are not overlooked. All staff plan and work together very well, there is a constant liaison between them during the working day as well as at the more formal weekly meetings. Work covered in this area of learning makes a strong contribution to the children's success in their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Communication, Language and Literacy

67. Most children arrive in school with language skills that are well below average when compared to children of a similar age. By the time they leave nursery, many are on course to achieve average standards. This represents very good achievement. Children make such good progress because they are taught well, develop high levels of independence and they are so keen to learn. They are progressing rapidly through the 'stepping stones' (the suggested stages of development that children move through as they work towards the Early Learning Goals).

68. Most children's listening skills have improved considerably since they arrived in school. They listen attentively to adults as they share stories and realise how important it is to pay attention if they want their turn in the discussions. Children adopt a similar role in their own play where they model what they have seen with an adult. A good example of this was seen during a group activity when a child was pretending to read a story. Although it was a large group, no one interrupted her as they listened to her interpretation of the story. It was clear from their responses and the conversations that followed that they had a very good understanding of the story and knew some of the protocols of conversation as they waited for their turn to speak.

69. Children enjoy using the writing area which is set up as an office. Most can hold a pencil well and some write pretend messages as they answer the telephone. One boy spent a long time composing a letter which he placed in an envelope and then posted through the letterbox in the home corner. He was able to explain the contents of the letter and knew that what he had written would convey a meaning to the person receiving it. He finished the play and discussion by telling his friends that he could not delay, "because I've sent the letter so now I've got to arrest someone. I'm a policeman." In their creative work too, most children make a good attempt at writing their own name on their painting and do this without being prompted by adults.

70. Developing an interest in reading and introducing children to the skills necessary are given a high priority. For example, a large number each day choose to look at books in the library area. They regularly select books and share them with an adult, modelling their reading on stories that they have heard and recognising some of the pictures. Many are able to pick out their own names as they self register, understanding how the words and pictures combine to tell a story.

71. Teaching is good overall and, often, it is very good. Staff use imaginative play effectively to improve children's language skills. For example, one adult took on the role of the assistant, talking to children about the tasks they were involved in as they played in their imaginary palace, complete with throne and palace guards. She also engaged them in conversation at their own level, offering advice where necessary but generally remaining in the background to make sure the play stayed purposeful. She asked the questions in such a way that those in the group with a weaker understanding of English were not inhibited in any way. They stayed confident and were happy to make a contribution at their own level. Similarly, those who were more confident users of English were asked more complex questions and were expected to respond by using suitable words in the correct order. As a result of such good teaching, children make rapid progress and learn quickly.

72. Not all the teaching seen was as good as this. In the more ordinary lessons, the pace of the learning was too fast and learning opportunities were missed. An example of this took place during a group activity when the adult was talking to children about what happened in their house at the start of each day. The questioning moved very quickly and some children found it difficult to keep up and opportunities to draw out the less confident children were missed. Nevertheless, they all contributed and made some gains in their learning.

73. Children respond well to the teaching. They stay actively involved because staff provide such a wide range of interesting activities.

74. Children who have special educational needs are identified early and they receive a good level of skilled, adult support. The smaller number who are new to English receive equally good levels of support. Both groups have detailed programmes of work which give them the opportunity to make consistently good progress. For example, staff identify and include in the plans small steps for them to work towards. They enjoy their work because staff make it interesting 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

75. Overall, children make very good progress in their mathematical development and most are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. Staff concentrate on making sure children learn to count and recognise figures and include many opportunities within the topics that are covered. Children are successful because they practise these skills regularly and staff help children to consolidate what they have just learned.

76. Many of the children already count to ten and they use their knowledge of number rhymes and counting games to reinforce this learning. The school has been successful in introducing elements of the national numeracy strategy, such as regular mental arithmetic sessions. This was seen during a baking session when children were asked to work out how many of their friends were in the group and how many cakes would be needed. Some higher attainers were able to work out simple sums using these same figures and then apply their knowledge in other situations. For example, they could work out how many bands were available for children to put on as they went to play in the home corner.

77. Children are developing a good understanding of shape, space and measures. They make comparisons, sort small objects according to size or colour and are beginning to use simple mathematical language. Progress in this area is slower for some because they start in school with limited ability to express themselves. Nevertheless, they use words such as “less”, “bigger” and “smaller” when describing the differences in the amount of sand or water they have put into their containers. Many are already able to identify patterns and recreate some for themselves, for example selecting the correct size and shape for the blocks when they construct a building.

78. Children learn well and they make good progress in their mathematics. This is because they receive a good level of skilled support. Their work is closely checked and adapted to meet individual needs whenever necessary.

79. Behaviour in activities is very good and children are keen to get on with their work. They have positive attitudes and concentrate well on activities that interest them. When they are required to work together to complete their tasks they do so sensibly, although many of the younger children still choose to play individually for much of the sessions.

80. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall. In the most successful lessons, adults make good links with other activities. For example, in role play in the home area (set up as a room in a house), the adult introduced mathematical language slowly and sensitively, making sure each group member could answer questions at their own level. Children were confident enough to take a risk even if they were not sure of the answer because they knew the adult nearby was always supportive and encouraging. Two girls were observed who pretended to clear up the plates and cutlery after a party. They counted the plates as they put them away and were even able to work out how many they thought might be missing.

81. Teachers’ planning is very good and is an important factor in the success of the teaching. Clear objectives are set for each lesson and 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

82. Children achieve very well in this area of learning. They are on course to reach the standards expected for children at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are provided with many good opportunities for learning through well planned classroom activities as well as opportunities to extend what they know through the local environment. They respond well to these challenges. Standards are similar to those found during the last inspection.

83. Children can talk about simple scientific processes. They learn to observe carefully and describe accurately what they see. For example, in one activity they studied colours that could be created by adding food colouring to water. Many correctly predicted what might happen if some of the colours were mixed and discussed how these could then be used to make their paintings even more attractive.

84. Children also make very use of construction materials to improve their skills. A group built a new ‘Asda store’ using large plastic blocks. They took great care to design it so that it matched other supermarkets they knew. They discussed the task in detail with their friends, looking at all the possible options before deciding how to go about the build. Eventually, they began the task but soon realized it would not be completed in the time so they had to make plans for the next session. The way in which the four children worked collaboratively on this project was particularly impressive.

85. Children's skills in using information and communication technology are good. They move objects around the computer screen showing good control. They type their own names and then know how to print out the finished project. For example, one boy spent a long time planning what he wanted to display on the screen. He added squares and lines to make his print out even more attractive before proudly taking his work around the nursery for others to appreciate.

86. Because of the school's successful work in this area, children have a good 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. Children were able to talk about the Queen's Jubilee, excitedly looking forward to the party that was planned. In addition, the 'World Cup' display created a great deal of interest and this enabled staff to introduce ideas about other countries of the world. Children responded very positively to these displays and planned activities, because they were set at just the right level for them to understand.

87. Teaching in this area is good because staff provide such an extensive range of interesting experiences that involve all the children. As a result, they learn more quickly and are able to consolidate their learning through a series of related experiences. A good example of this was seen in the way the discussions about the 'World Cup' led to one child designing and making his own 'blow football' table complete with goalposts. As a carefully constructed working model, he was very keen to make sure his classmates were using it properly and regularly checked throughout the inspection that everything was as it should be. His pride was evident as he described to adults what tools he had used and how he had joined the materials together. Staff concentrated on this obvious interest and ensured it became a valuable learning experience. The good quality of the lesson planning is an important contributory factor that helps to deliver successful 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

88. The school provides a wide variety of activities to improve children's physical skills. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. The majority of the children are on course to meet the expected standards by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage.

89. In the classroom, children confidently handle small tools such as pencils, chalk, paintbrushes, and glue sticks to paint pictures and make collage. Children playing in sand and water pour and fill containers with good control. Most children like the feel of malleable material, such as dough, and use it to form shapes, rolling it out firmly. The majority of the children stay at the activity to cut it and mould it into birthday cakes, adding candles and decorative patterns. Every one takes great care to use the tools and equipment carefully as demonstrated by the adults and then replace them appropriately when they have finished their task.

90. Children play outdoors in the wide range of activities with great enthusiasm. They pedal and steer tricycles and scooters, and push and pull wheeled toys such as 'The Royal Carriage' along the painted routes. Most can ride in the correct direction following the arrows and can stop and start at the sign. When the weather is appropriate, children use the large climbing equipment and raised tunnel. Confident children climb up on the rungs, crawl through the tunnel and then slide down with care and control. Some children can throw and aim with

increasing accuracy; for example, throwing a large ball into a net or throwing quoits at wooden pegs. All have a good awareness of space and each other as they move around the nursery and on the playground.

91. The quality of teaching in the majority of the lessons is good and the rest is satisfactory. In the best lessons, they provide a very good level of challenge for the children. Adults manage the activities well with a strong emphasis on the skill to be developed. For example, children making models to develop their manipulative skills were encouraged to knead, roll and cut dough. They were then praised and encouraged until they finished the task. Children working at computers are similarly well supported.

92. Some of the teaching outside is less effective but it is still satisfactory. On these occasions, adult support is only fleeting and opportunities to encourage the children to extend the activity are missed. For example, children throwing large balls into the net were rightly praised for their achievement but the adult did not stay long enough to show them how they could step further back to aim. Opportunities to develop and extend children's physical skills are missed on occasions such as these.

93. All children take good care of all equipment both indoors and out. At the end of activities all resources, including those used outdoors, are replaced in the appropriate place before children move on to the next activity.

Creative Development

94. Children's attainment in this area of learning is in line to meet the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. All groups of children make very good progress in improving their imaginative and creative skills. This is because adults give them so many opportunities to practise and consolidate their skills, using good quality resources.

95. There is a good range of opportunities to develop children's imagination through play and talking about current events. Great imagination and ingenuity were demonstrated as they played in the 'royal palace', for example, as kings and queens, getting ready to go out in their carriage or summoning their soldiers to guard them. Attractive resources such as a throne, cloaks, crowns, jewellery and soldiers' busbies ensured all children were totally involved in their play, extending their imagination and sharing ideas successfully.

96. The quality of teaching in the majority of the lessons is good and, in the rest, it is satisfactory. Where the teaching is good, activities are suitably prepared, managed and supervised well. In the role-play areas for example, staff are on hand to support the play or intervene sensitively if required. Children playing in the 'palace' 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.

97. During some music activities, children play percussion instruments, sing a wide repertoire of nursery rhymes and songs, and listen to high and low notes on the chime bars. The activity is then extended further to include dancing to a variety of rhythms. Because the lesson went on too long, the pace of some children's learning slows as they become tired and work with less enthusiasm.

98. All the creative areas in the nursery are effectively organized to encourage children to be independent and make decisions about the tools and resources necessary for their tasks. For example, children in the painting area were seen to decide on the size and shape of paper they required before starting to paint pictures using red, white and blue paint. Similarly, children making models and collage carefully choose from a wide bank of resources and decided the

tools needed to complete their work. This way of working supports and encourages children to be confident and self sufficient when completing creative tasks.

99. Staff plan well together to provide a rich, stimulating curriculum and maintain careful records of individual children's progress. All children's work is appreciated and displayed to good effect around the nursery and in the corridors.