

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Frizington Nursery School**

Frizington

Cumbria

Unique Reference Number: 112090

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Bell

Reporting inspector: Wendy Scott  
T11922

Dates of inspection:

2nd - 4th June 1998

Under OFSTED contract number: 508839

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## Information about the school

Type of school	-	Nursery
Type of control	-	Local authority nursery school
Age range of pupils	-	3 - 4
Gender of pupils	-	Mixed
School address	-	Main Street Frizington Cumbria CA26 3PF
Telephone number:	-	01946 810846
Appropriate authority:	-	Cumbria
Name of chair of governors:	-	Mr. Neil Richardson

## Information about the inspection team

Team members	Aspect responsibilities	Areas of learning
Wendy Scott Registered inspector	Attitudes, behaviour and Teaching SMSC The efficiency of the school Equal Opportunities Attainment and progress The curriculum and	Mathematical development Knowledge and Language and literacy
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Marion Cumbers Lay inspector	Partnership with parents and Staffing, accommodation and	

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## **Main findings**

- 1 This is a good school, which provides a high quality of education for its pupils. It helps them to make very good progress and to achieve very well in all areas of learning. The staff, who have had to face considerable uncertainty about the future, work as a close team for the benefit of their pupils.

### **Standards**

- 2 Attainment on entry is low overall, but is very variable. Pupils' achievement is now above expectations for their age, and is good or very good in all areas of learning. Some are surpassing the desirable outcomes which have been set for five year olds, although they are all still only four years old. Children with special educational needs are achieving very well in relation to the targets set for them.
- 3 Pupils' personal and social development is strongly supported. They enjoy coming to the nursery, and have become independent and confident members of the school community. They consider others, and are able to co-operate with other children and with adults. Most concentrate well, and can persevere with an activity for extended periods of time. The majority can express themselves clearly, and those with language difficulties persist in making themselves understood. All are able to pay attention to what others say, and respond well to adults' suggestions.
- 4 Speaking and listening is well supported, and pupils are achieving well. Early literacy skills are successfully promoted through the provision of stimulating opportunities to read and write within a wide range of activities. Pupils are interested in books, and although their group story times are limited, they are learning through the many informal opportunities they have for enjoying stories and looking at books with adults during the course of the sessions. Standards in early reading are good, with many pupils able to identify a range of familiar words. Most can read and write their own names. Many are beginning to use capital letters correctly, and able pupils reach exceptionally high levels in early expressive writing.
- 5 Achievement in mathematics is also very good, and pupils make the most of the many opportunities they have to count, match, sort, sequence and grade equipment and materials. The organisation of the environment, both in and out of doors, and the daily routines provide strong reinforcement of mathematical concepts. Many pupils are able to do simple addition and subtraction, and can set and solve problems related to their chosen activities.
- 6 Provision for information technology is in the early stages, but pupils are beginning to work well with an electric typewriter as well as the new computer, and are attaining sound standards. Achievement in other aspects of technology and in geography is very good, with pupils showing high levels of awareness of their environment. The teaching style adopted by the staff fosters the skills of observation and investigation. Pupils are encouraged to experiment, and to learn from any errors, which are regarded as learning opportunities rather than mistakes, and this leads to very good achievement in science. Overall, they achieve well in knowledge and understanding of the world.

- 7 Physical development is generally good. Although there are limited opportunities for energetic activity out of doors, pupils' fine motor skills are very well developed. They attain high standards in music, and the very good levels of artistic expression combined with the effective provision for imaginative play mean that achievement in the creative area of learning is very good.
- 8 Pupils, including more mature and more able children and those with special educational needs, make very good progress during their year at the nursery. Staff introduce all pupils to the routines and possibilities in each activity area at the start of the year. They encourage increasing independence in learning, and ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged. The year finishes with a detailed transition programme which is designed to prepare pupils for the move to primary school.

### **The quality of education**

- 9 The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers and nursery nurses are well qualified, and most are very experienced in the early years of education. Students and volunteers make an effective contribution to the work of the nursery, and their presence means that very beneficial ratios of adults to children can be maintained. All the adults work as a closely integrated team and are committed to responding to the children's needs, and to following and extending their interests. They work thoughtfully to make varied provision for learning, and to promote pupils' autonomy and choice. The headteacher provides continuing guidance and support through her presence in the classroom, and takes a strong lead in the day-to-day running of the school. She has a flexible timetable, and is available to support staff, governors, parents and pupils as required.
- 10 Staff share their thinking with parents and governors, who understand and appreciate the school's approach. Verbal communication and the provision of attractive photographic records of past activities, together with notices in the classroom which explain the learning possibilities in each area, provide accessible information for visitors to the school. More formal documentation, such as the school development plan, does not do justice to the complexity of the school's work. Although staff are evidently clear about their intentions and evaluate their work daily, this monitoring is not systematically planned or recorded.
- 11 Pupils, including those with special educational needs respond well to the high expectations of behaviour and learning, and to the calm, consistent and sympathetic approach of the adults. Staff have in depth knowledge of child development and of the curriculum, and they show sensitive insight into individual pupils' circumstances. The nursery nurses and the teacher make notes of their perceptive assessments of pupils' progress, and these are all written up formally by the headteacher at the end of the year. She also carries out a check after the first half term which informs the priorities for each child's learning. These are agreed with parents.
- 12 Staff have given a great deal of creative thought to the use of space, and have brought all areas of the building into the service of the curriculum, including the staffroom, the kitchen, and former storage areas. They have organised the classroom very carefully to make good use of the limited space, and to foster pupils' independence. Storage is



carefully arranged, and access to resources is very well planned. Pupils learn mathematically whilst developing physical and self-help skills as they select and put away the materials. The daily routines include some adult-directed sessions for small groups at snack time and towards the end of sessions which complement the child-initiated work which shapes much of the focus of adult interventions. Pupils have a timetabled group story once every three days, and this, together with the timetabled whole group session at the end of each morning or afternoon may be cut short if other activities last longer than intended. They also tend to be interrupted by parents and carers coming in to collect their children, or by the timetable of the transport.

- 13 This has some impact on the balance of the curriculum provided by reducing an important aspect of pupils' access to language and literacy. However, experiences which stimulate reading and writing as well as speech are provided across all areas of learning, and literacy development permeates the work of the school. Pupils have choices among a wide range of worthwhile activities, both indoors and out, which are enhanced by well planned educational visits and good links with learning at home. More precise monitoring of the book loan scheme, of the use of the computer, and of the range of activities each pupil experiences, would enable staff to refine their existing good, but anecdotal, awareness of each child's preferences and progress. They record their work with pupils who have special educational needs in a very detailed way, and the systems used to do this are effective.

#### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 14 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Staff are aware of each family's circumstances, and respect differing views, while working towards an ethos of common concern for others. They appreciate the individuality of every child, and provide an excellent example for pupils, who are similarly thoughtful of others. Children are very co-operative and considerate, and their spiritual development is promoted by the caring attitudes to be found throughout the school. They have experience of a range of living and growing plants and creatures, and are introduced to a variety of inspiring images, including their own work, which is carefully displayed. Religious festivals are celebrated in an informed way during the year. The staff also encourage pupils' spiritual development through songs and music, and the sensitive response they show to pupils' spontaneous expressions of wonder.
- 15 Cultural development is similarly well supported, and pupils can see and handle beautiful examples of fabrics and images from a diverse range of cultures as well as from their own heritage. Books, dolls and other resources reflect the breadth of society beyond the immediate neighbourhood.
- 16 There is a strong focus on pupils' moral and social development, which is seen as a key to future success in life and learning. The staff aim to enable pupils to share an enjoyment in their surroundings as well as a sense of responsibility for the environment. This is coupled with taking responsibility for themselves, and understanding and accepting the reasons for co-operation in work and play. There is a close match between the nursery's stated intentions and the way that the school community operates in practice.

## **The efficiency of the school**

- 17 The local educational authority is responsible for most of the costs of the school, and makes an allowance towards the costs of educational resources. The amount granted is based on the number of pupils who were on roll in the previous academic year, which was significantly lower than the number who currently attend the school. Agreed spending on educational resources have taken the school over budget recently, but the shortfall has been met from the school's voluntary fund. Existing procedures for financial control are carefully and accurately undertaken, but the headteacher knows that more precise monitoring of the budget is required, and has arranged for training.
- 18 Parents and the wider community show their support for the nursery in many ways, including active fundraising which provides invaluable additional income. Voluntary contributions from parents each week cover the costs of the snacks, which are an important part of the planned teaching programme. The headteacher is drawing on the commitment of the governing body, and trying to involve the governors more strongly in planning for the future of the school. They have taken an increasing responsibility for the school development plan, which highlights relevant priorities. However, it does not currently identify costs or detail other resources needed to support the achievement of important objectives, and is not an accessible working document. Clarifying these points for action would help the headteacher to manage some strategic elements of her role, including the delegation of responsibilities to other members of staff.
- 19 The circumstances of the school mean that it is imperative for the headteacher to set aside time for contingency planning, especially now that the school has been awarded a grant for providing training and support to other agencies through outreach work. The school provides invaluable information about the curriculum for parents and visitors, which are very relevant to future plans. The initiative will also benefit from more explicit documentation than is currently available of planning, of the evaluation of topics, and of the monitoring of all pupils' access to the curriculum.
- 20 The school makes very good use of its restricted space, and is dealing with the vandalising of its outside store with the help of governors and the community. The use of time for teaching and learning is less satisfactory, partly due to the constraints of transport arrangements, but also because parents and carers collecting pupils at the end of sessions are allowed take them away up to half an hour before the class is timetabled to close. The number of empty places at the nursery, which has a 15% vacancy rate, is beyond the school's control, as it is due to the impact of the LEA-wide admission policy. Another difficulty is caused by rather low attendance levels, largely due to illness. These factors significantly reduce the numbers of pupils who can benefit from the high quality of education on offer, and mean that the school gives sound rather than good value for money.

## **Key issues for action**

21 The headteacher, supported by the staff, governors and LEA should now:

expand the school development plan into a more useful strategic framework by spelling out an action plan for each target, identifying ways of evaluating progress, and by allocating a budget to prioritised projects;

further develop the expertise of staff by establishing clearer roles within the staff team and delegating responsibilities;

specify times for necessary management tasks, including improving existing checking systems and informal evaluations so that these can be used as rigorous monitoring tools to inform forward planning;

build on the excellent information for parents and governors by arranging for curriculum planning and recording systems to be documented more explicitly, so that clearer evidence of the school's existing good practice is made accessible to a wider professional audience;

enable as many pupils as possible to benefit from the high quality of education on offer by protecting group times from interruption at the end of sessions, while continuing to seek to fill vacancies and to improve attendance

# Introduction

## Characteristics of the school

- 22 Frizington Nursery school opened in 1974, at a time of expansion in designated social priority areas, funded through Urban Aid. It is centrally situated in a West Cumbrian village where there are high levels of unemployment since the closure of much local heavy industry. 10% of families are headed by lone parents, and 7% live in isolated rural areas. All pupils are white, and have English as their mother tongue. Currently there are five pupils with identified special educational needs. In recent years there has been some influx of skilled personnel in the area, and this has created a wider social mix within the nursery.
- 23 The school can take up to 80 part-time pupils, which is a larger group than the immediate catchment area contains. In the past the school has admitted pupils for up to five terms, offering both full- and part time places. It has provided for high proportions of children with severe special educational needs. The LEA admission policy is now limited to a part time place for pupils over the academic year in which they become four. Although the local education authority provides transport to enable 24 pupils from the neighbouring town and the surrounding rural area to attend, numbers have been reduced to 68.
- 24 The school aims to provide a safe and happy environment where independence is encouraged along with co-operation, where creativity and a sense of fun are valued as well as concentration and where a respect for others is nurtured right from the start. Staff have identified the possibilities for learning within the range of activities on offer. They intend to respond to pupils' needs and persistent concerns, thus extending children's understanding as well as their knowledge.
- 25 The main focus of the school development plan is to maintain the development of staff and governors, and of community links. All policies are reviewed annually, and staff intend to work on the curriculum, with a particular focus on IT and facilities out of doors. A successful bid has been made to extend the school's work through developing training and other outreach initiatives, in collaboration with other agencies. Detailed planning for the future depends on decisions to be made by the LEA, but the school is very determined to find a constructive way forward.

## Key indicators

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	61
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

#### **Attainment and progress**

- 26 Pupils are attaining good or better standards overall, and there are examples of outstanding achievement in personal and social development, early writing and aspects of creative development. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving well, and make good progress towards achieving the targets set for them.
- 27 Attainment on entry varies but is generally below average, and pupils make very good progress during their time in the nursery. 7% are on the SEN register and 15 more have speech or communication difficulties. Most of these are to be reviewed by the speech therapy service next year. The majority of pupils are well on course to meet all the outcomes described as desirable for pupils entering compulsory education. Many already exceed those for aspects of language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- 28 Most pupils are achieving good social skills and can manage their own personal needs. They take responsibility for themselves, and support each other in co-operative play, negotiating the use of popular items such as “walkie talkie” sets. Many pupils choose to work and play in single gender groups, but both boys and girls experience the full range of activities available. There are few disagreements, and children can usually resolve these amongst themselves, rarely needing adult support. Pupils make independent choices and persevere for concentrated periods of time at activities in which they are interested. They are developing their confidence and self esteem.
- 29 Pupils are responsive. They have very good listening skills, and can sustain enthusiastic conversations with adults and their peers, and are confident in expressing their feelings. They join in with discussions at group times, and develop their language and literacy skills through imaginative role play, which they extend into many areas of the nursery. Pupils are interested in print, and make rapid progress in early reading and writing. Achievement in reading is good: most pupils can read their own names and can sound out familiar letters. They are interested both in stories and information texts, understand the structure of books, and can follow the direction of the print. Some pupils can decode their own dictated stories. Achievement in early writing is very good. Most children can write their own names recognisably, and attempt to write other words. A few very able pupils can scribe their own stories, with accurate spelling and the correct use of upper and lower case letters.
- 30 Pupils attain very good standards in their mathematical development. They can talk about shapes and fractions as part of practical activities, for instance when preparing foods or experimenting with the parachute. They discuss relative size in many activities, and work with apparatus and equipment of different scales. They compare, sort and match one-to-one in many situations, including role play and clearing away equipment. Many can count beyond ten, and discuss larger numbers in relation to their door numbers. Some can carry out simple addition and subtraction, using apparatus linked to number games, and can add and subtract a year or two from their age in their

heads. They know a range of rhymes involving numbers.

- 31 Generally pupils have a good level of understanding and knowledge about the world in which they live. They are able to recall of the events of their day and can remember what happened on previous occasions. They talk about their families, recognising their own history through contact with grandparents. Captioned books of photographs provide very relevant records of past events to which pupils and parents refer. Finding their way around the nursery and outings to the farm and the seaside enable children to gain a growing awareness of geographical concepts. These are further developed by visitors and stories. Pupils comment on the weather and are aware of changing seasons. They show curiosity about items on display, and explore these with magnifying glasses; they grow seeds and plants in different environments and observe their growth; they touch creatures and animals in the nursery and on visits. They experience forces in their physical play outside and in using sand wheels and magnets. Through preparing foods, mixing paints, and adding water to clay, pupils observe the changes that occur. They use a wide range of materials and cut and join them in a variety of ways for different purposes. They construct and make models, sometimes referring to examples, using recycled materials and blocks of different sizes. Pupils are gaining confidence in using the computer tracker ball and the keyboard.
- 32 Standards of physical development are good, and fine motor skills are often very good. Pupils climb and jump safely and are able to balance with increasing control. They are able to use writing implements and other tools with dexterity and precision, and make very good progress. The standard of singing and music-making is good and other aspects of creativity are of a very high standard. Paintings on display and work with colour mixing show excellent levels of attainment. The rich provision for role play promotes a high degree of imaginative play, which stimulates achievement in many areas of learning.
- 33 The well informed staff have high expectations, and work well as a team to promote the very good progress pupils make in all areas of learning. Their careful observations, which are discussed daily, lead to relevant provision which is responsive to children's interests. The sensitive individual support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make very good progress towards meeting specified targets. Pupils are gaining the skills, knowledge and positive attitudes that provide a very good foundation for their future learning.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 34 Pupils evidently enjoy their time at the nursery. They have long periods of uninterrupted time to develop their ideas, and are very independent in selecting and managing the equipment and tools needed. Most concentrate well, and persevere until their task is completed, sometimes carrying their work forward from one session to the next. Children with special educational needs, in common with their peers, respond well both to their targeted programmes and to more open-ended activities, and all behave very well around the school.
- 35 Pupils work co-operatively in pairs and small groups. They share ideas and listen carefully to each other, and most can participate very well in larger groups too. They

pay attention to adults, and relate confidently to staff and to visitors. They learn and practise self help skills, and are very ready to take turns and share resources. The respect which children show for other people's feelings and views is influenced by the example of the staff, who consistently demonstrate constructive attitudes to others and to the tasks in hand.

- 36 One of the features of the school is the care taken of the environment, including plants and animals. Pupils all play a full part in tidying up, and are very responsible in their use of equipment and tools. They also make an important contribution towards creating attractive surroundings through their art work and gardening.

### **Attendance**

- 37 The pupils all enjoy coming to school and are keen to attend regularly. Although attendance is often below 90%, the reasons are always known, and are usually unavoidable. The staff monitor absence carefully, and keep the registers efficiently. They, together with parents and governors, are well aware of the need to make good use of places at the nursery. The flexibility allowed on arrival and collection results at times in the disruption and shortening of final group sessions. This is sometimes due to the unavoidable demands of the transport schedule, but means that many pupils have less than the two and a half hours to which they are entitled.
- 38 A further difficulty for the school is the vacancy rate, which at present is 15%. The LEA admission policy means that the school is unable to be flexible in responding to local need for places for younger pupils, or for full time places. Ten percent of parents travel from outside the immediate locality to bring their children to the nursery, and the provision of transport enables a significant number of other families to gain access to places. The situation has been under review for some time, and is very unsettling for the staff, and for the local community, which values the nursery highly.

### **Quality of education provided**

#### **Teaching**

- 39 The quality of teaching is high, and well over half the sessions observed were very well taught. Teachers and nursery nurses work collaboratively, and involve students closely in the educational programme. Parents too are very aware of the school's approach to early education, which is explained in the brochure, in the annotated displays of pupils' work, through notes about learning in all areas of the nursery, and in the informative booklets of photographic evidence. The flexibility and responsiveness to pupils which are an important part of the way that the staff work are coupled with consistency. This has developed over the years, and is sustained through the continuing presence of the headteacher in the classroom. She does not undertake a specific programme, but sees it as her role to be available as needed. She supports new members of staff, and inducts them with care.
- 40 The teacher and nursery nurses all have a key group of pupils, and plan snack times and guided activities for these children. The timetable, which is adapted when necessary, includes a rota consisting of a story time, directed small group time, and

supervised tidying up at the end of sessions over three days. The high ratio of adults to children enables staff to pay close attention to pupils' needs and interests during sessions, and they agree each day where they intend to focus their attention. One of the strengths of the teaching is the perceptive and detailed observation of individual children's responses to the activities on offer, and the quick and effective way that these are followed up. Staff are also very interested in pupils' spontaneous ideas, and use children's questions and suggestions in developing the curriculum within the framework of the desirable learning outcomes. Pupils with special educational needs flourish in this supportive environment. Because their progress is frequently monitored against set targets, effective provision is made for them.

- 41 Staff have high expectations for all the children, and are well able to support and extend individual pupils' learning very appropriately. They observe the children carefully, and their daily discussions expand on the notes which they make for the records. This informal assessment makes a good contribution to short term planning for many individual pupils. At present there is no overview of the adults' or the children's involvement in activities to support staff in refining their longer term planning for groups across the areas of learning. Any concerns are raised and addressed, but there is as yet no systematic approach to monitoring every pupil's progress between the comprehensive assessments written by the headteacher at the beginning and towards the end of the school year. However, her assessments are shared with parents and carers, who are invited to agree targets, and are welcome to exchange information with the school at any time. A close relationship is established with parents from the initial home visit, and the continuing contact, which is maintained through written journals for children who come by taxi or coach, directly benefits children's attainment and progress.
- 42 The ingenious use of all available space, coupled with very carefully thought out organisation of resources, makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school. The environment is highly structured, and this enables staff to put their philosophy of giving pupils a range of choices into successful practice. The timetable allows for a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. It is interpreted flexibly in order to allow pupils to follow through their own interests. However, the time pupils have for learning, in particular during their group activities, is too often interrupted or curtailed by the way that they can be collected well before the end of sessions.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

- 43 The nursery delivers a broad and balanced curriculum which is described under the headings of the desirable learning outcomes for pupils on entering compulsory schooling. Learning opportunities are expanded by the thoughtful provision and organisation of resources, and enriched by visits and visitors. The experiences that children encounter promote their personal, intellectual and physical development. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is also fostered. Adults work very effectively together, and are committed to developing the self esteem and confidence of all children through a focus on their particular needs. They follow and develop the interests of pupils in all areas of the curriculum. Each session is discussed and analysed in order to provide progression, continuity and a consistent approach to



developing the learning of individual pupils. Staff identify learning objectives, which are introduced through structured work, and also follow pupils' own interests within open ended activities.

- 44 Useful guidance in the staff brochure describes the expected learning opportunities in all areas of the classroom and out of doors, and this expands the short curriculum statements which have been agreed. The advice includes the use and organisation of a varied range of resources. Well organised provision to support pupils' personal and social development, together with literacy and mathematics, permeates all areas of the nursery. Equal opportunities issues are thoughtfully addressed.
- 45 Written plans are limited. They describe a list of activities and events in the long and medium term. Short term planning is based on the evaluation of the previous week's work. It is very brief, but provides a helpful list of prompts for each day. Planning is complemented by the very informative notices and labels which are displayed around the nursery. These explain the possible learning which can be drawn out from each activity area. Attractive books of photographs provide further explanation about the curriculum, and these are very well used by parents.
- 46 The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs, and follows the guidance in the Code of Practice. Identified pupils are sensitively supported, and make very good progress towards achieving their targets. The school has worked very closely and successfully with a parent on a positive behaviour programme for one pupil. Another pupil has individual help to improve articulation and enunciation, and 15 more pupils have been referred for speech therapy. The school maintains good liaison with support agencies, and the staff have attended relevant training to help them to offer access to the full curriculum to pupils with particular special needs.
- 47 There are detailed structures in place for noting pupils' achievements and progress. Apart from the headteacher, all members of staff have responsibility for a group of pupils at each session, and maintain the day-to-day records for these children. Home visits and the entry profile provide initial information about children's early personal, physical and linguistic development. Early problems may be identified through contact with parents and health visitors. Staff make regular notes on each pupil. The most effective of these contain frequent analytical entries, with dated annotations on samples of work and photographs. Notes on some records are less focussed on learning, and some pieces of work are undated. The headteacher checks all pupils' files regularly. She draws on the notes made by the other staff to write a report on the progress made by every pupil at the end of their first half term, and at the end of the year. More detailed and frequent entries are made to keep track of pupils with special educational needs, and the LEA guidelines on the Code of Practice are met.
- 48 The headteacher maintains a simple check list to note the progress of every pupil, which is updated three times a year. She notes any gaps in their experience, and alerts staff to areas which need to be extended. The headteacher's daily involvement in the class enables her to have an oversight of the curriculum. She and the other staff are in a position to observe pupils' learning continuously.
- 49 As well as daily informal contacts and exchange of information, parents receive a

progress check after the first half term and are asked for their comments. Parents of pupils who come to and from school by bus or taxi share a very informative daily journal with staff, which contains comments about their child's achievements, and events in the nursery. All parents are offered an interview with staff to discuss their child's progress half way through the year. At the end of the year they are invited to see summative records, and to add comments before they are sent on to receiving primary schools. The headteacher, as special educational needs co-ordinator, reviews individual education plans with the parents concerned, and arranges additional meetings as necessary. Pupils' work is highly respected and very attractively displayed.

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 50 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good. One of the great strengths in the school lies in the awareness staff have of the cross-curricular nature of young children's learning, and their ability to understand what each pupil is gaining from the activities on offer. Staff are aware of each family's circumstances, and appreciate the individuality of every child. They respect differing views, while working towards an ethos of common concern for others, and share their enjoyment in their surroundings as well as a sense of responsibility for the environment. The approach of the staff provides an excellent example for pupils, who are similarly thoughtful of others. The children's very co-operative and considerate behaviour is grounded in the supportive ethos of the school, which promotes spiritual development through pervasive caring attitudes. Pupils experience a range of living and growing plants and creatures, and are introduced to a variety of inspiring images, including their own work, which is carefully presented. Religious festivals are celebrated in an informed way during the year. The staff also encourage pupils' spiritual development through songs and music, including the use of grace before snack time, and the sensitive response they show to pupils' spontaneous expressions of wonder.
- 51 Cultural development is similarly well supported, and pupils can see and handle beautiful examples of fabrics and images from a diverse range of cultures as well as from their own heritage. Books, dolls and other resources reflect the breadth of society beyond the immediate neighbourhood.
- 52 There is a strong focus on pupils' moral and social development, which is seen as a key to future success in life and learning. The staff have a very sophisticated understanding of how to select and use appropriate strategies to help children to meet their high expectations for behaviour, and involve parents closely. They aim to enable pupils to grow to take responsibility for themselves, and to accept the reasons for co-operation in work and play. There is a close match between the school's stated intentions and the way that the school community operates in practice. The staff provide very good examples of considerate and reasonable behaviour, and pupils make notable progress. Their politeness and self possession is rooted in their growing self confidence and sense of independence.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 53 The school provides very good support to children and their families. The nursery environment is safe, secure and friendly. Staff plan carefully for pupils' social development, and encourage them to become independent, and to develop in confidence and self esteem as they settle in and mature. From the initial careful induction, staff observe pupils' progress, and use their observations to inform their teaching.
- 54 Relationships between staff, children and parents are warm, mutually respectful, and supportive. Parents praise the ethos of the school, and are happy about its values and approach to discipline. They appreciate the standard of behaviour which is achieved. The staff allow plenty of time for pupils to become accustomed to the expectations of the nursery, and implement the daily routines very tactfully. They reinforce healthy eating and good manners through the regular snack times, and help pupils to participate fully in clearing up and caring for the environment. There are particularly well thought out systems in place to prepare pupils for the transition to reception class, which include visits to their new schools.
- 55 Health and safety issues are taken very seriously, and staff are vigilant in escorting pupils to and from the bus and taxi. Supported by the governors, they ensure that LEA guidelines are observed. Child protection procedures are in place, and sensitively implemented. The school monitors attendance efficiently and encourages parents to make good use of places at the nursery. It can call on its links with educational welfare service and with local health visitors when appropriate. Throughout their year at the nursery, the well-being of the children and their families is the school's first priority.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 56 The school has a flourishing partnership with parents, and works hard to maintain and develop this. A home visit from a member of staff, who is identified as a special contact, follows informal initial visits to the nursery and invitations to attend a picnic and summer fair in the term before pupils are due to start. These establish a warm home-school relationship. Information from home about each child is welcomed as a start to the child's record, and the school passes on useful advice and reassurance for parents as well as providing insight into the curriculum on offer.
- 57 Parents and carers feel able to raise queries with the school whenever they arise, and take full advantage of arrival and departure times to exchange news and discuss any concerns informally with the staff. Those whose children travel by taxi or bus maintain communications with the school through journals which note any significant events, and there are frequent newsletters. Staff hold meetings when individual parents can discuss their child's progress, and also run communal events to which members of the wider community are also invited. Parents are kept well informed about the school's approach through its brochure and other informative booklets about the curriculum. Information is also available on tape. The many attractive photographic records of visits and events in the life of the school, and the displays of pupils' work, give an indication of the breadth of the curriculum on offer.
- 58 Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting, and those responding to the

questionnaire, are pleased with the ethos of the school, and very satisfied with the quality of education provided. They support the nursery through fundraising, and in many cases through direct help in the classroom and garden. The widespread support within the community has been particularly valuable during recent difficult times. The nursery participates in local activities, and is actively considering building on its existing work with students through outreach to other services.

- 59 The school has facilitated a local initiative by providing crèche facilities for adults attending an evening IT class in the neighbouring primary school. Staff there appreciate the collaboration, and comment that pupils joining their reception class from the nursery are reaching higher than expected levels of attainment. There are also good relationships with other primary schools, with the local health visitors, and with other agencies, including the speech therapy service.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

- 60 The headteacher has determined and well informed views about the educational direction of the school and provides very dedicated and supportive leadership for staff. She takes on many tasks linked to class responsibilities as well as those involved in managing the school. Her vision for the education and learning of young children is shared with all the staff, and she documents their contributions to policies, planning and records. Communications with parents are excellent, and many have a high level of awareness about the value of early years education and the processes of learning. The philosophy that staff should encourage motivation and progress by building on pupils' interests and by planning according to their identified needs, is illustrated by informative displays and descriptive, illustrated albums depicting the learning process. It results in a supportive ethos and a very interesting learning environment.
- 61 Although the school development plan does not specify priorities clearly, the stated aims of the plan underpin the ethos of the nursery. All children are valued and their developing independence and self worth have a high profile. Priorities are identified from the observations and discussions of the work of the nursery agreed by staff together with those dictated by LEA policy. The current format covers a four year period and lists tasks and responsibilities for the current year. It is not a practical working document, and there are no fully developed action plans with measurable success criteria to help to evaluate progress. The headteacher has tried to capitalise on governors' interest and support by asking them to draw up the development plan, but this is a key task which needs her direct involvement. The current high ratios of adults to children mean that she is in a position to delegate other aspects of the work she currently undertakes to allow her to set aside more time for strategic management. The teacher helps in recording details of staff training and development, but does not at present take a professional lead in record keeping or the curriculum. The full time nursery nurse supports NNEB students, by discussing their programmes and advising them about their practice.
- 62 The headteacher leads the staff team in developing the curriculum, and writes up all related policies and guidance which are seen by governors before the final drafts are completed. She monitors practice through daily involvement in the classroom and garden, and inducts new members of staff. She completes termly checks for each child in all curriculum areas, based on the notes kept by the other staff. There is an effective system for the focused tracking of pupils with special educational needs, but there is no comparable monitoring of the quality and frequency of other pupils' experiences in different areas of learning.
- 63 Many governors have had children at the nursery. They and other members of the school community have a high regard for the work of the school, and continue to offer their support after their children have moved on to the next stage of education. The governors are closely involved with the life of the school, and divide responsibilities according to their particular interests. Formal meetings take place termly, parent governors are in daily contact with the school and the chair of governors is a frequent visitor. The governor who takes an interest in special educational needs meets with

the headteacher at least once each term to discuss identified pupils and to check the SEN register. The policy is reviewed and updated annually. Another governor who is interested in special educational needs gives invaluable support to parents with children who are experiencing particular difficulties. An annual governors' meeting for parents is held, and a report is available beforehand. The school meets all statutory requirements.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 64 Staff are well qualified and experienced in the early years of education, and work well together as a team. Low numbers on roll mean that there is a particularly high ratio of adults to children, and this contributes to the quality of education on offer. Arrangements for appraisal are about to be formalised, but the head has carried out professional development reviews with all the staff. She usually covers for them if they need to be released for professional development or other activities. The teacher collates and organises information about opportunities for inservice training, and decisions about training priorities and possibilities are made collectively. Any new ideas are shared effectively, and put into practice following careful thought.
- 65 The nursery is well organised and the building is kept clean and tidy. It is a bright and pleasant place to be. The indoor accommodation is limited, and suffers from condensation, but staff use every area with great ingenuity and imagination. The school has identified the need to focus attention out of doors, in order to extend the breadth of pupils' physical and scientific experiences. The loss of storage due to vandalism presents real difficulties, and the school appreciates the help offered through the local rugby club, which allows equipment to be stored in their nearby hut. Plans include the replacement of the store, and fund raising for a covered area. The staff also have other ideas which will result in considerable added interest to the limited outdoor space. Pupils do have the opportunity for active physical play in the recreation ground next door, and often spend time there on their way home from the nursery.
- 66 Resources are neatly stored, and, although not plentiful, are carefully selected. They are of high quality, and chosen to reflect different cultures and beliefs. Pupils do not at present have much time to use the new computer, and some would benefit from continuing access to a fuller range of equipment such as jigsaws to allow for consolidation as well as extension of their skills.

### **The efficiency of the school**

- 67 The local educational authority retains responsibility for meeting most of the costs of the school, and makes a capitation allowance for educational resources. The amount allocated is based on the number of pupils who were on roll in the previous academic year, which was significantly lower than the number who currently attend the school. Staff suggest spending on resources in line with their agreed priorities. These decisions are related to justifiable educational objectives, but have taken the school over budget recently. With the agreement of governors, the headteacher has drawn upon the school fund to make up a shortfall. She has asked for training in IT systems for financial management from the LEA, because she and the school secretary

recognise that they need help in establishing more effective control. Existing procedures are carefully and accurately undertaken, but more precise monitoring of the budget overall is required.

- 68 Parents and the wider community show their support for the nursery in many ways, including active fundraising. This additional money enables the school to continue to improve its facilities and resources, and is well used. Any surplus is kept in an interest-bearing account. Voluntary contributions from parents each week cover the costs of the snacks which are an important part of the planned teaching programme.
- 69 The school development plan does not currently identify the costs or detail other resources needed to support the achievement of identified objectives, and thus is not an accessible working document. Clarifying these points for action would help the headteacher to manage some strategic elements of her role, including the delegation of responsibilities to other members of staff. The emphasis on teamwork has enabled the staff to evolve very consistent ways of working, which should now be capitalised upon and used as the basis for more effective use of their time. Arrangements for professional development are good, and already extend individual strengths and interests. Further inservice training could underpin the establishment of clearer roles for all the staff.
- 70 The circumstances of the school mean that it is imperative for the headteacher to set aside time for contingency planning. She also needs to ensure that best use is made of a grant which has been awarded for a community initiative. The proposed possibilities of providing training and support to other agencies and to parents through outreach work are in line with government and LEA priorities. They will, however, benefit from more explicit documentation of curriculum planning and evaluation than is currently available. The excellent information about the curriculum which is presented to parents and governors will also be relevant.
- 71 The school makes very good use of its restricted space, and is overcoming the considerable setback of the vandalism of its store for outdoor equipment. The use of time is less satisfactory, partly due to the constraints of transport arrangements, but also because parents and carers collecting pupils at the end of sessions can take them away up to half an hour before the class is timetabled to close. This disrupts the experience of pupils remaining in the group as well as those who are leaving. The number of empty places at the nursery, which has a 15% vacancy rate, is also beyond the school's control, as it is due to the impact of the LEA-wide admission policy. Another difficulty is caused by rather low attendance levels, largely due to illness. These factors significantly reduce the numbers of pupils who can benefit from the high quality of education on offer, and mean that the school gives sound rather than good value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **Areas of learning for children under five**

#### **Language and literacy**

- 72 Attainment in language and literacy is well above average, and very good overall. Some examples of excellent work were seen. Pupils are on course to reach the learning outcomes expected of five year olds, and many already achieve them. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective individual support in attaining targets identified for them, and parents are also kept well informed.
- 73 Pupils are responsive to adults. They listen carefully and contribute enthusiastically discussions in both small and large groups. Some pupils have a sophisticated vocabulary and can describe tastes, textures and smells. They express their feelings and make their needs known very clearly. Those with speech difficulties are observed with sensitivity, and are supported in improving their articulation and clarity in enunciation. Children hold sustained conversations with their friends during activities, and ask questions when they are exploring and experimenting, for instance when they are digging in the garden or when they are involved with interactive displays linked to the current theme.
- 74 Early reading skills are good. Pupils enjoy books, and many choose to look at books when there is an adult available in the book area during activity sessions. They understand the structure of texts, following the direction of print and indicating that both pictures and words carry the meaning of the story. They refer to books for information, and frequently turn to the high quality books of photographs which illustrate learning and events in the nursery. The majority of pupils recognise their own names and register their presence by placing their name cards on a board as they enter each session. Many can identify initial sounds, and can point these out in books and on labels for displays and equipment, including packaging. Some pupils dictate stories or descriptions of their work to adults, and are able to re-read them.
- 75 The standard of early writing is high, with some excellent examples to be seen. Many pupils can write their own name unaided, and a significant group are able to write their own stories, spelling words correctly and distinguishing between upper and lower case letters. All pupils are encouraged to express themselves in writing, and most experiment with some form of mark making or writing. They label their work, including their growing seeds in the garden, and write for many purposes, including role play.
- 76 The teaching of language and literacy is very good overall and staff provide opportunities to foster literacy in all areas of the nursery. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are given stimulating opportunities to learn, and all make very good progress. Adults observe pupils' achievements carefully, and develop them from day to day. For instance, a child's interest in adding "s" to make a plural when labelling items on display was reinforced when a member of staff pointed out the label on a package used the following day. Staff communicate daily about pupils' progress, deliberately build on their interests to extend their



experiences and learning. All adults work alongside children skilfully, and encourage them through individual support. The planned use of weekly story books is helpfully linked to the current theme, but the organisation of groups means that pupils have planned story times only once every three days. They would benefit from more frequent group story sessions. Staff note their observations, and collect samples of children's' early writing. The most useful records are written frequently, and the samples and photographs are carefully dated and annotated. Some are not consistently maintained.

- 77 Reading, writing and role play are constantly available in many areas of the nursery, and there are additional opportunities for literacy out of doors. The nursery has an adequate supply of books, supplemented by books from a library loan scheme, which the children help to choose. There is a small collection of enlarged texts, and a few story props are available. Drama is well supported with a range of popular dressing up clothes and portable equipment, as well as the furnishings for "domestic" and "office" play. Equal opportunities are addressed and positive multicultural images are promoted through the use of pictures, clothes and equipment. There is a book and tape loan scheme which is managed independently by parents and the children themselves, although a significant number do not make regular use of this supportive facility.
- 78 There is a short written policy for language and literacy which takes account of the stated desirable outcomes for pupils on entering compulsory schooling, supplemented by staff guidance for activities and resourcing for all areas in the nursery. Staff share a philosophy about children's learning and their approach to teaching, and have frequent discussions to refine planning and practice based on their assessments of pupils' developments and needs.

### **Mathematical development**

- 79 Standards of achievement in mathematics are very good, and many pupils are already reaching the desirable outcomes set for five year olds. Many can count to ten or more, are practising counting backwards, and are using ordinal numbers as they take turns. They are beginning to do simple addition and subtraction, using practical materials. Some can recognise, record and order numerals. There are many opportunities to experiment with size, shape, position and quantity, and pupils can copy and repeat patterns using two or three colours. Domestic routines, especially at tidying up times, give plenty of practice and reinforcement of key mathematical concepts. Pupils are introduced to accurate mathematical language, and encouraged to apply and consolidate their growing understanding in a wide range of contexts. They are confident in ordering their ideas, and are eager to use their mathematical skills in the domestic play area, at snack times, and in the garden as well as in block play or in making models. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving very well. They benefit from the school's carefully structured approach, as it consolidates their understanding as well as their knowledge, and maintains motivation through the links with practical experience.
- 80 The whole learning environment is highly organised in ways which support and stimulate mathematical thinking. Activity areas are set out with silhouettes so that

pupils can return equipment to the right place independently, thus developing their ability to match one to one and to sort materials according to their size or shape. Parents as well as staff store modelling materials by shape and other attributes, and pupils select the categories they require with care. This continuous access to open ended activities develops their abilities to match and fit shapes together. There are few opportunities to work with jigsaws and construction kits, and it would be useful to ensure that written numerals are always in view. However, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in all aspects of mathematics.

- 81 The quality of teaching is good. All the staff are conscious of the possibilities of the tasks they provide, and are quick to see and extend the mathematical content of pupils' own chosen activities, in line with the school's written policy for mathematics. They are skilful in linking mathematics to play, and encourage exploration and investigation in contexts which are interesting to individuals or small groups of children. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the opportunities available, and show good levels of independence in the use of the wide range of well kept resources. They also collaborate well in sharing equipment, and in solving problems together.
- 82 During the inspection, targeted improvements in pupils' physical competences involved direct experience of going up and down, being first, second, third or last to jump, counting down, and fitting large blocks together to create alternative balancing apparatus. Folding the parachute gave experience of the relationships of changing shapes on a large scale. Tidying up and snack times provide deliberate opportunities for direct teaching of mathematics, which are well used. Staff make observations, and consider how to build on their assessments of pupils' needs and interests from day to day. The headteacher ensures that a checklist of competencies is completed soon after entry and before pupils leave for primary school.

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

- 83 Knowledge and understanding of the world includes early experience of the humanities and science, and of technology, including information technology (IT). Achievement in IT is sound, with several pupils showing familiarity with the computer, printer and tracker ball, and technical ability in manipulating the controls of an electric typewriter and audio tapes. The majority achieve very well in science and the humanities.
- 84 There is evidence that pupils have many opportunities to discuss past events, and can recall previous experiences well. The school keeps beautifully presented photographic records of outings and visits, which stimulate conversation about the past, and staff use interesting historical artefacts as a starting point for discussion about the differences between earlier times and the present. The stages of development of babies and links with grandparents provide relevant examples of the ageing process. Similarly, the direct experience of one child who had been to Australia was used as a cue for widening geographical ideas. Pupils' achievement in early geography is generally very good, partly due to the range of visits which they make in the neighbourhood, and the journeys many make to reach the nursery. These are supplemented by photographs of the locality and a map, which are of great interest to many children. Less experienced pupils, together with some who have special educational needs, find it difficult to connect these more abstract examples to their first hand directional experience and

could benefit from a wider range of opportunities to explore and represent their understanding. This could be done through allowing for continuing access to jigsaws and rail or car tracks, which would allow for revisiting skills and reinforcing concepts.

The well resourced role play, following up visits from a fire-fighter, a police officer and other public servants, promotes an understanding of the world of work, which was strongly reinforced through the presence of the local harbourmaster who came into the school for a large group session during the inspection. The outdoor area is being developed in ways which will enrich the children's awareness of their immediate environment.

- 85 Pupils are achieving very well in science. They have wide-ranging opportunities to find out how materials behave in their use of paints, sand, clay and water, and experiment with forces through specially selected equipment, such as sand wheels and a parachute. The weather enabled children to feel and observe the effects of wind and rain while they were out of doors, which were highlighted by adults. The plans to extend provision in the garden by installing ropes and pulleys to add to existing opportunities for planting and caring for living and growing things have already resulted in the installation of heavy posts. Pupils have been given very rich experience of the natural world through the visit of an expert from a nearby aquarium, and this has been followed up by the creation of their own touch tank. The wealth of direct experience, such as very precise close observational painting of fish and continuing interest in a wormery, have encouraged the use of reference material. This in turn has helped pupils to follow up their questions in detail. More evidence of the positive effect of first hand experience can be seen in the lively and expressive paintings of farm animals on display. Many pupils still recall their visit to a neighbouring farm in the spring which gave them new insights, such as the warmth of newly laid eggs.
- 86 This attention to detail is also encouraged through technology. The exceptionally well organised workshop area enables pupils to select materials with care and to be discriminating in their choices. They are skilful in the use of tools, and can record their constructions for future reference. Some are beginning to evaluate their work, and to make improvements to their models, sometimes over several days. They work with clay and other malleable materials, and show skilful control of the medium, producing complex interpretations of their ideas. There are few construction kits available, as staff prefer pupils to use their ingenuity to create structures out of open-ended materials. During the inspection several pupils designed their own apparatus for balancing out of doors, using large blocks and planks. These were tested and carefully adjusted, and broadened the scope of physical activity for the whole group very effectively.
- 87 Staff know that they need more training in IT in order to refine their work in this area of learning. At present, their records of IT only note when pupils have a turn on the computer and do not specify what they can do. Other records are more comprehensive, and the quality of teaching is good overall in this broad area of learning. Staff see their role as supporting and extending pupils' own ideas, and promoting their independence. This approach is particularly successful in relation to technology, as pupils learn how to use a wide range of tools and materials competently, and are able to take control of their own projects. The high expectations of the staff are matched by the children's response to the thorough programme, which

is developed over the year. Small group and snack times are used for adult-led tasks, when pupils are introduced to a range of possibilities, and given guidance on techniques. They are thus enabled to become discriminating in their selection of resources, and are now using the whole of the nursery as a workshop at this stage of their time at the school, when they are very confident and skilled in finding what they need. Pupils' concentrated focus on their chosen tasks and their perseverance in following through their interests are underpinned by their independence of thought and action.

- 88 Staff knowledge of child development in the early years, coupled with their insight into individual strengths and needs, means that pupils with special educational needs are helped to join in with all activities, and are achieving well. The quality of teaching is good overall, and all pupils are making very good progress in gaining skills to support their growing knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **Physical Development**

- 89 Attainment in this area of learning is good overall. Pupils have very good fine motor skills and are developing increasing skill and control in their large motor skills. They handle small equipment precisely, and work with a range of tools of different sizes. They use and replace things carefully during activity sessions, and are very skilled in clearing up, which is an integral part of their learning. Children are efficient in their use of dustpans and brushes, and can manoeuvre large spades in very wet sand, and lift the resulting heavy buckets very carefully. They gain dexterity in the use of modelling and manipulative materials, and through different methods of construction, using a range of implements for joining different materials. They use keyboards and are beginning to gain confidence in the use of the tracker ball on the computer. Pupils are becoming confident in their large body movements, and many already have good skills. They try different ways of jumping and landing from a height, and are making very good progress with balancing.
- 90 The teaching of physical skills is very good, and staff encourage all pupils to take part and to make progress. They promote awareness of individual strength and the safety of others, and guide pupils in their use of writing and drawing implements for painting and modelling. They introduce more demanding equipment progressively through the year, and show pupils how resources can be used. They allow time for children to experiment and to practise emerging skills, and support them in taking on new challenges. Routines, such as self help with tabards, putting wellingtons on and off, helping each other with fastenings including zipping up coats and jackets, preparing food and tidying up, are all planned to develop pupils' competence in routine physical skills. Staff discuss pupils' physical development regularly. They also consider the health and safety implications of the activities they plan, and refine the opportunities made available from session to session.
- 91 Pupils select daily from a worthwhile range of activities, and make very good progress in developing their skills. There is limited outside space and the vandalising of an outside store means that children currently have no access to wheeled vehicles, and there is no large climbing frame. The school is planning to develop its outdoor area, and meanwhile, many pupils play on the large apparatus in the public recreation

ground nearby on their way home from school. Pupils are enthusiastic and sometimes persevere for prolonged periods to complete a construction or master and improve a skill on larger apparatus. They are very good at managing their own needs, and often co-operate in helping others. When necessary, they will ask for help to manage something to their satisfaction, and take pride in their capabilities and the new skills that they are acquiring.

- 92 Staff have agreed a concise statement for physical development which takes account of the expectations of five year olds. The statement provides very helpful guidance, and lists activities and resources for physical development throughout the nursery, including the outside space. The school's development plan includes the extension of outside provision: digging areas in the sand and garden are already established. An area for gardening has been started, and hardstanding for running, hopping climbing and jumping as well as imaginative play is frequently available. Apparatus and equipment for ball skills, including football and netball posts, are set up and used according to the needs and interests of pupils.

### **Creative Development**

- 93 Attainment in music is good, and very good standards are achieved through imaginative play and in art work. There are excellent examples of paintings on display, and pupils are very sophisticated in their exploration of colour and texture. They work with shades and tones of colour and develop their work in both two and three dimensions. Adults give some direct guidance, and pupils have scope to work independently for a significant proportion of time. They practise and consolidate their emerging skills through the free choice of activities. Resources are carefully set out for ease of access, and staff encourage pupils to select materials with particular qualities. Most pupils can recognise and name a wide range of colours and shades. A variety of opportunities are available to promote pupils' imaginative play in different areas of the nursery, and, as long as their clothing is safe, children may work on any activity in dressing up clothes.
- 94 Different sorts of paint and gauges of brushes are in regular use, and pupils frequently experiment with colour mixing. They often bring different media together to create collage pictures or construction. The combinations they try out can include fabric, card, and boxes decorated with paints and pens. Close observations of fish during the inspection resulted in very detailed pictures, with shades of colour mixed and chosen with care, and placed deliberately on paper to create both realistic and imaginative representations. Pupils often work for sustained periods, sometimes in co-operation with others, to complete a piece of work to their satisfaction.
- 95 Pupils are very enthusiastic in their approach to music, and are very eager to sing. They can keep time, and show a good sense of rhythm when they are singing or playing instruments in large and small groups. Percussion instruments and a piano are constantly available to the children, and are frequently in use. Pupils' recent interest in singing and dancing has led staff to provide a small stage area and microphones, which have proved very popular, and encouraged even some shy pupils to perform to their peers. Many accompany themselves in music making and singing. They appreciate opportunities to listen to taped songs and themed music, such as the sounds

of the sea, while they work. A parent playing the guitar generated much interest and enthusiasm, and stimulated increased enjoyment in the accompanied singing of favourite songs. Other visitors to the school have played other instruments, including the piano, and pupils follow these examples in their own performance.

- 96 Imaginative play is very popular, and pupils make very good use of props and dressing up clothes to act out different roles. They often enact and develop situations in co-operation with each other. Areas of the nursery are adapted by pupils in many different ways, and may be transformed into homes, hospitals, baby clinics or offices of various kinds as interests dictate. These initiatives offer opportunities to develop all areas of the curriculum, with a particular emphasis on personal and social development and all aspects of language and literacy.
- 97 The quality of teaching is good or very good in this area of learning. Staff encourage pupils to choose the resources they want to use with discrimination, and the children all develop a sense of responsibility, taking a real share in tidying up with adults. Equipment is exceptionally well organised and cared for. It is accessible for pupils, who can use and replace it with ease. A range of materials to extend creative development is kept readily accessible. It includes brushes and papers of different types and sizes, categorised workshop materials and easels for painting and chalking. Musical instruments are also always available. Out of doors there are opportunities for working on a larger scale, including the use of decorators' brushes and buckets of water.
- 98 There are very attractive displays of children's work throughout the nursery. They are taught how to mount their own pictures, and their creations are treated with respect. Some examples of paintings and drawings are stored in their record folders, and there are many photographs recording past creative experiences. Both books and displays are enhanced by informative explanatory labels indicating the learning involved. There is a short policy for creative aspects of learning which contains useful suggestions for developing materials and areas throughout the nursery.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **Summary of inspection evidence**

- 99 The inspection was carried out over a period of three days by a team of three inspectors.
- 100 Almost 13 hours of observation were recorded, in the nursery classrooms, the kitchen, and out of doors.
- 101 14 hours 30 minutes of interviews were held with staff, which included discussions about their own perceptions of their roles, in the context of the framework for inspection. The nursery nurses and support staff contributed their own particular perspectives. Several governors, including the chair, also shared their views with inspectors.
- 102 The inspection team talked with children across the age and ability range as they engaged in a variety of activities.
- 103 Representative samples of pupils' work and records, and individual education plans were scrutinised.
- 104 Photographic records, display, and documentation from the school were examined.
- 105 A parents' meeting was held which was attended by 9 parents, and the 38 (57%) questionnaires returned by parents were analysed.

## Data and indicators

### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Nursery School	34	0	5	N/A

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	2
Number of pupils (FTE) per qualified teacher	17

#### Education support staff

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	65

Average class size:	34
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### FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1997/98
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	£
Total income	2,076.00
Total expenditure	1,755.00
Expenditure per pupil (FTE)	69.26
Balance brought forward from previous year	-293.00
Balance carried forward to next year	28.00



**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	67
Number of questionnaires returned:	38

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	53	47			
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	68	32			
The school handles complaints from parents well	45	42	11		
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	42	55			
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	53	47			
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	53	45			
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	61	32	5		
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26	37	29		
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	68	32			
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	50	50			
My child(ren) like(s) school	87	13			

**Other issues raised by parents**

Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting for parents expressed their strong support for the school, and showed a very informed appreciation of its educational approach.