

INSPECTION REPORT

CHILDREN'S HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL

Bow, London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100882

Headteacher: Mrs J Hendricks

Lead inspector: Mr P B McAlpine

Dates of inspection: 24-25 May 2004

Inspection number: 255781

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:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3-5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	95
School address:	92 Bruce Road Bow London
Postcode:	E3 3HL
Telephone number:	020 8980 4662
Fax number:	020 8981 2503
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Graham Goodsir
Date of previous inspection:	22 April 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most. The building is unusual for children of this age in that it has three storeys. It was originally built in the 1920s to support disadvantaged children from London's East End. The current provision is based on the equivalent of 70 full-time places. At present, there are 95 children on roll, 46 attending full-time and 49 part-time, either morning or afternoon. The balance of full and part-time places varies continually. The children are organised into two classes, one on the ground floor of the building and the other on the first floor. The two classes are mixed ability and a mix of full and part-time places. The second floor has community provision and space for small groups to work. Admission is in September or January, depending on age. Gaining a full-time place varies according to availability. Children generally have two academic terms full-time before they transfer to primary school but this is not guaranteed and some children have only one term. The immediate locality is very mixed socially and economically and has elements of significant deprivation and disadvantage. About 90 per cent of the children are from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. More than 80 per cent of the children are from Bangladeshi families. A small number, about eight per cent, are from white British families. The remainder are from a range of other minority ethnic and mixed ethnic backgrounds. Almost all of the children are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language; this proportion is very high. More than 10 languages are spoken, with the main languages being Bengali, Sylhetti, and Somali. About 17 per cent of the children have special educational needs; this proportion is average for primary schools but very high for Nursery schools. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is well below average overall because so many children are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school is participating in national initiatives and receives money from the Small School Fund and the Sure Start initiative. It is also participating in a Private Finance Initiative run by the local authority.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21552	Mr P B McAlpine	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Special educational needs
9708	Mrs S Daintrey	Lay inspector	
23453	Mrs C Cressey	Team inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Creative development
19774	Mrs M Docherty	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Physical development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. All of the children achieve well and make good progress overall. They respond to the teaching with concentration and good cooperation. The teaching is consistently good throughout. The pace of learning is good. Leadership and management are effectively improving the provision and raising standards. Value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the provision for children with English as an additional language is effective;
- the children are very confident and settled, show great interest in the activities and behave very well;
- the curriculum is well planned and taught and is effectively meeting the learning needs of all children;
- there is a good level of pastoral care for children and very good support for them based on careful and rigorous observation of their development;
- the good leadership of the headteacher has created a strong teaching team.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school no longer has the serious weaknesses found at that time. All shortcomings have been remedied. The children's achievement, including that of the more able, is much improved reflecting the good, thoroughly planned support for children with English as an additional language, the well balanced curriculum, and the impact of reflective school self-evaluation. Teaching has improved and is now good. Leadership and management have improved and are effective.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The achievement of the children is good in all of the nationally agreed areas of learning. The achievement of those learning English as an additional language is particularly good. Standards on entry are generally very low. Many children speak very little English. Almost all of the children are enthusiastic, interested and learn quickly. By the time they transfer to the Reception classes in other schools, about two-thirds of them are attaining levels typical for their age and well on course to meet the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. A small number of children, about 10 per cent, including those of Bangladeshi and white-British heritages, already attain these goals in communication, language and literacy a year or more ahead of expectations. Children with special educational needs are well supported and their achievement is good. **Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Attitudes and behaviour are very good. The arrangements to promote attendance are satisfactory. Punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching is consistently effective and there is a good balance between directed, guided, and self-chosen activities. Learning is quick and of good quality for all children, reflecting the teachers' very effective use of assessment to diagnose learning needs and the effectiveness of the teaching methods they use. All members of staff place a high priority on developing the children's skills of speaking and listening in English and the provision for children with English as an additional language is good. The teachers and their assistants have well-developed knowledge and expertise and form a very effective team. The curriculum is balanced and all areas of learning are taught in full. The activities are interesting and motivating. **The quality of care, welfare, health and safety is good. The quality of guidance and support is very good.** The partnership with parents is good. The partnerships with other schools and with the community is satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an effective leader and is well supported by all others with leadership responsibility. The headteacher's actions to improve the school after the previous inspection have been successful. Governance of the school is good. The governing body is well led and has been strengthened by recent appointments. All relevant statutory requirements are met including those for ensuring racial equality.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think highly of the school. No major concerns were raised by parents during the inspection. Children like school and show enthusiasm each morning when they arrive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant shortcomings. The most important thing the school should do to improve is to raise the achievement of the children even further by continuing to implement its own, appropriate development plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Achievement is good in all of the nationally agreed areas of learning. Standards attained on entry are very low but rise quickly because of effective teaching so that the standards attained by the children due to transfer to the Reception year in September are broadly average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New entrants settle quickly and rapidly gain confidence and make friends.
- Children learning English as an additional language make very good progress and achieve well.

Commentary

1. The personal, social and emotional development of children is good by the time they are ready to leave though they are often quiet and reserved on entry. Newly admitted children are generally lacking in confidence and find it difficult to make their needs known since they speak little English. Very quickly, because of the effective arrangements to help them settle, they show curiosity, a strong impulse to explore, make friends, and soon begin to accept the needs of others; characteristics that are normal for their age. Almost all children enjoy being in school and quickly gain a typical degree of independence for their age.
2. Progress in communication, language and literacy is very good and all children are attaining in line with their capacity for learning. Support is good for children from different minority ethnic backgrounds and for the few from white-British families. There is no significant variation in achievement between children from the different ethnic groups. Within the space of a year, the typical child, whatever their background, improves from using very few spoken words and being reluctant to speak when they first join the Nursery to being able to talk, explain, question, ask for things, and respond to others using simple statements by the time they leave.
3. Standards on entry are very low in communication, language and literacy compared to the typical Nursery nationally because almost all children speak English as an additional language and most are in the very early stages of English acquisition. On entry, around 90 per cent of children know only a few words of English and tend to communicate to members of staff using gestures and body language in preference to words. Progress is quick. Currently, about two-thirds of those soon transferring to Reception classes, having been at the Nursery just over a year, are confident to talk about their wants and interests using English. Their attainment in communication, language, and literacy is broadly in line with the national goals for early learning. This is a considerable achievement given their starting point. A few children have very high attainment and can read several familiar words and phrases and follow the logic of a story; these children are almost two years ahead of the typical levels for this age group. The provision for children learning English has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now effective. Very good priority is given to developing skills of speaking and listening and the teachers are very successful in achieving this priority.
4. The children's acquisition of mathematical knowledge and understanding is quick, reflecting the effective provision. Progress over the course of their year in the Nursery is good and almost all of them are working to their potential. Just over two-thirds of the children who will soon transfer to the Reception classes in other schools have attainment that is consistent with the typical picture for this age group. They can count to ten, for example, are beginning to recognise numerals and solve simple mathematical problems.

5. Achievement is good in knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. The provision is building on the children's natural curiosity and helping them to develop skills of observation and recording. It is helping them to learn about their immediate environment and local community. They are gaining in confidence and ability in constructing, building, and using technology. Provision outdoors is very well planned to meet different learning needs and this helps all children to achieve well. The regular review and modification of activities by the members of staff means that activities are always challenging whatever the ability of the child. Most children are just beginning to make marks on paper when they enter the Nursery and, by the time they are ready to transfer, can draw reasonable representations of objects and people, showing basic details such as arms, buttons, eyes and hair. They can generally mix and name colours and, in singing, recall the words of a few familiar songs.
6. Children with special educational needs achieve well. Those with learning difficulties are identified early and given appropriate support. The provision is tailored to their individual need and is effective. All children with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, experience a suitably challenging curriculum and are helped to participate fully in all activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Children are keen to learn. They pay good attention to staff expectations and generally behave very well. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all of the children are eager to learn, demonstrate very good attitudes to their work, behave very well in class, and enjoy taking responsibility
- Relationships between children and with members of staff are very good.

Commentary

7. Children arrive each morning eager to learn and settle quickly to tasks. Morning and afternoon arrivals of parents and children are characterised by a buzz of anticipation and eagerness to take up the range of activities planned by staff. Children willingly engage in teacher-directed work and also initiate their own activities, drawing their parents and carers to see what they are going to do. The Nursery offers very practical and visual activities to stimulate children's interest and a great desire to explore ideas.
8. All of the children behave well and behaviour is very good overall. There is a willingness to take responsibility, for example in self-registration, using labels to indicate their arrival. They follow the guidance and instructions of their teachers very well, join in role play with confidence, and older children help younger ones showing care and consideration. Many younger children use Sylheti to attract each other into the tasks and share ideas. Confidence in using English quickly grows and the language is used unprompted in many play activities, including creating imaginary worlds in role-play, initiating conversations as they work at tables, and sharing dramas in the outdoor play area with their friends.
9. The children are expected to work with consideration and fair play in all their activities and this is the main reason why their behaviour is so good. They are offered clear guidelines on how to behave and are encouraged to understand how particular behaviour might affect others. For example, when one child dropped his work on another's he was helped to understand why this was inappropriate and to apologise to the other child whose work had been treated so carelessly. Children develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values through the broad range of activities planned. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in

personal, social and emotional development by the end of their Reception year because of the very good progress they are making in the Nursery.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is very good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all of the teaching, including the work of Nursery nurses and assistants, is effective.
- Assessment is rigorously used to diagnose learning needs.
- The members of staff are very willing to evaluate the effectiveness of their work and share good practice.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	18	2	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

10. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better in quality and 90 per cent is good or better. The amount of good teaching has quadrupled since the previous inspection and is much higher than found in the majority of other schools. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. The very good teaching is highly motivating. In a very good guided story session, the teacher cleverly gained the interest and attention of the children so that they became engrossed in the story. Gradually she started to ask questions and require explanations and predictions, involving all of the children in speaking and giving extended answers. The good teaching, including the work of the assistants, is consistently effective and meets the learning needs of all children. It is well planned, purposeful and appropriately challenging.
11. The teaching has a good balance between shared, teacher guided and self-chosen activities. This aspect of the provision has improved markedly since the previous inspection. All members of staff have good knowledge of the needs of the age group and are competent. They understand the curricular requirements for this age group very well and have good expertise when working with children. Planning is effective. All of the activities have a clear learning purpose based on the children's learning needs. All members of staff understand these purposes and adapt what they do with individual children to help them meet the learning goals.
12. A wide and appropriate range of independent and self-chosen activities are made available indoors and outside. These activities are challenging and cover all of the nationally agreed areas of learning. They allow children to follow their interests, experiment, explore, and develop their skills. Good provision is made for role-play, physical, and creative development. The activities effectively extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world and give good priority to improving communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. During self-chosen activities, the members of staff participate in the activities to extend the play and increase the challenge.

13. Guided work is of particularly good quality and has improved since the previous inspection because of the good leadership of the headteacher and the willingness of all members of staff to share and learn from good practice. The members of staff are skilful in asking questions and in getting children to expand their answers. This is particularly useful for children learning English as an additional language. Resources are very well used to make learning come alive and give relevance to the words and phrases being taught. The strategies and methods used have been developed over the past two years through involvement in local projects, particularly the Oracy Project, and from the advice of the local authority. This willingness on the part of the members of staff to learn from the experiences and good practice of others is a major reason for the good improvement in teaching quality.
14. The arrangements for assessment are thorough and give a clear picture of each child's attainment across the full range of the curriculum. They have improved significantly since the previous inspection and become instrumental in raising the achievement of the children. Good records are maintained. Assessment is regular, every six to eight weeks, and is providing useful information about progress made in each of the areas of learning. Records specifically for children learning English as an additional language are detailed and enable progress to be measured. Because of the good assessment procedures, the members of staff know the children very well and plan activities that are challenging and meet the learning needs of children of all abilities. In their meetings at the end of each day, the members of staff review the children's progress and plan the next steps in learning and this is excellent practice.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good with some very good aspects. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The accommodation and resources are good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good links between the six nationally agreed areas of learning.
- Very good equality of access and opportunity for all children.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- The deployment of support staff is very effective.

Commentary

15. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Activities are based clearly on the six nationally agreed areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. Planning is good and provides children with a wide range of stimulating and purposeful learning activities. There is a strong emphasis on speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills. Teachers carefully integrate these aspects of learning into the planning of activities and tasks, both inside the classroom and outdoors. Good emphasis is placed on imaginative role-play situations, challenging games and on well-chosen stories and rhymes. As a result, children make good progress across the national stepping-stones¹ for learning in the age group and achieve well.
16. Activities are planned so that all children benefit. Considerable effort goes into ensuring that everyone, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English, receives the support they need to experience the curriculum in full. All children are included in daily activities to promote early literacy and mathematical skills. There is a good balance of activities between those children choose for themselves and those which are directed by the adults. This was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and has now been completely overcome. Learning experiences are carefully organised so that children attending part-time have access to a full range of activities.

¹ Stepping-stones are nationally agreed benchmarks used to identify different stages in learning throughout the Foundation Stage.

17. All activities have very clear learning intentions for the different ages and attainment levels of the children. Planning is evaluated and refined to meet the identified needs of individual children in the light of their response to the activities. This ensures tasks are well matched to those children who learn at a slower rate and those who need additional challenge. The provision for children with special educational needs is good. Care and attention is directed towards enabling all children, including those with physical disability, to participate in all activities.
18. The provision for children with English as an additional language is good. Several of the teaching assistants and some of the teachers are bilingual and between them can offer first language support in several languages. Although the priority is to encourage children to talk using English, first language support is readily provided to explain ideas and the meanings of words and to help when problems arise and children need to explain their needs in their home language. The programme of support is carefully planned and taught, with good attention given to those attaining highly as well as those who need a special boost to keep up. The strategies developed during the Oracy Project² are particularly useful in supporting bilingual pupils who are struggling with English.
19. The very good arrangements for children's personal, social and health education are a reflection of the school's caring ethos and values. This aspect of children's development is planned into all activities and promotes happy, secure and eager learners. The school reflects well the cultural diversity of its community. This is evident in the displays, resources and activities provided. Home languages, culture and religions are recognised, valued and celebrated. Initiatives such as the Oracy Project and Sure Start have been effective in accelerating children's learning and preparing them well for the next stage of their education in primary school.
20. Teachers and support staff work well together to plan and implement an effective teaching and learning environment. The thoughtful deployment of support staff, including those who are bilingual enables children to receive a high level of individual support which plays a significant role in their successful learning and good achievement. Although the building is still not ideal for its purpose, since the last inspection it has been adapted effectively to meet the needs of young children. The availability of a community room for parents and pre-school children and the well planned and resourced out door facilities have a positive effect on children's achievement.

Care, guidance and support

The overall provision of care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory and typical of most schools. The general level of care is good. Very good support, advice and guidance are provided which help children achieve well. Children's involvement in their work and development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for settling the children into Nursery routines are very good.
- Members of staff know the children very well and the support provided for them is very beneficially tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Children have good opportunities to make their views known.

Commentary

21. The school's induction³ procedures are very good and parents are fully involved in helping their child make a successful transfer from home to the Nursery. For example, parents and children

² The Oracy Project was organised by the University of London to help improve the way in which spoken language was developed in young children.

³ Induction refers to the arrangements for receiving new children into the school and helping them to settle and make friends.

are invited to attend a stay and play session once a place is offered. The headteacher knows the children and their families very well, ensuring, for example, that she meets them daily at the start and end of each session. Children are allocated to a key-worker which helps them to develop very good relationships with at least one adult in the school. This system is enhanced by the high number of support staff. Many of members of the support staff are bilingual and so can ease the transition for those children at the very early stages of learning English.

22. The school's very good procedures for monitoring children's progress and development are used very effectively to raise the levels of their confidence and achievement. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. For example, children who find it difficult to work in large groups are withdrawn to smaller groups or one-to-one situations when necessary. Higher-attaining children are given short sessions to stretch them further in their reading skills and prepare them well for the literacy hour in primary school. Members of staff keep a watchful eye out for children with disabilities, making sure that they are fully included in learning and play. The result is that all groups of children achieve well and each individual is able to make the most of the activities offered.
23. Children are successfully helped to contribute their ideas and make choices during their day-to-day learning. They are encouraged to select work they are proud of or interested in and show it to others. They are able to make their views known during circle time⁴ or story time when groups of children sit quietly with a member of staff. They are involved in plan-do-review sessions in which they are able to create an activity and then evaluate how well it went. When they leave the Nursery, the children are involved in compiling the impressive scrapbooks for their parents which summarise their progress over time.
24. Children are well supervised at lunch-time, both indoors and outside. The local education authority carries out regular and detailed fire risk assessments. Members of staff are trained annually on local child protection procedures. Some improvements to the health and safety of the children have been made since the last inspection, partly as a result of the building works, but these are not yet completed and there are still a few minor shortcomings in some of the records kept. The health and safety policy is appropriately identified as an area for review in the school's improvement plan.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Good programmes are provided to support parents, families and members of the local community. Links with other schools, colleges and the wider community are satisfactory with good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are involved and consulted very well about their children's education.
- A good number of courses and activities are offered to help parents and others in the local community to understand the education system and develop their own basic skills.

Commentary

25. A large number of parents for a school of this size attended the pre-inspection meeting with the lead inspector and expressed very positive views about the school, including the information they receive, the accessibility of staff and the way in which any concerns are dealt with. The school's own recent survey of parents confirmed a generally high level of satisfaction arising because the school works closely with parents as soon as a place is confirmed for their child. The presence of Sylheti-speaking members of staff is of enormous benefit in helping parents feel confident in coming to the Nursery, as they know that information can be translated for

⁴ Circle time is a teaching method used to promote personal and social development. The children sit in a circle during the teaching and this gives the method its name.

them and that they can ask questions and understand the answers. During the settling-in period, parents and carers are expected to spend time at the Nursery with their child. This enables parents to help their child adjust to school and develop good relationships with staff. It also enables them to learn how the school operates. Once their child has settled, parents still have daily contact with staff and the opportunity to see what their child is doing. They also meet the headteacher more formally at the end of the first term and when their child starts full-time to discuss their child's progress and how best they can contribute to raising their child's achievements. One area that a significant minority of parents would like to see improved is more information on how to help their children at home. The inspection team found that arrangements for sending work home are good, especially in reading where children take a book home nearly every day and parents are encouraged to record what books they have looked at with their child.

26. The school has made good use of national funding to run support programmes for local parents and carers. These are continuing using the school's own funds now that the projects have finished. Parents of pre-Nursery children are encouraged to get into the habit of coming to the building by attending a popular parent and toddler group, where they can also obtain advice on how to secure a place at the Nursery for their child. The school also offers a drop-in crèche to enable local parents to have a little time for themselves, and a drop-in session for childminders. Members of staff are experienced in providing courses and workshops to meet the changing needs of parents and the local community. These are mainly focused on literacy, but are also offered from time to time in mathematics and computer skills. One effective session was observed during the inspection in which a small group of mothers were able to gain confidence in using computers as well as practice in speaking English and an understanding of what their children are learning. The headteacher is appropriately trained to teach adults and is well supported by a bilingual member of staff.
27. The school has satisfactory links with the main primary school to which most children transfer. Care is taken to ensure that there is some continuity of learning, for example that topics are not repeated. Good links with the local college and with several secondary schools result in a number of students helping at the Nursery as part of their child care course or work experience placement. Community resources are satisfactorily used to widen the children's experiences; for example, to enhance provision in music, story and role-play, art and speech therapy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is good. Governance is good. Management is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is building a strong teaching team.
- The school self-evaluation procedures are good.

Commentary

28. The headteacher is an effective leader who has created a school with a very good ethos. She has rallied the spirits of all members of staff and tackled energetically all of the serious weaknesses found at the time of the previous inspection. The impact of her actions has been good. All of the weaknesses have been remedied to at least a satisfactory standard and the school has continued to improve many of them beyond the required targets. The headteacher is well supported by all others with management and leadership responsibility. The deputy headteacher is effective. Together, the senior management team is forging a highly competent teaching team, including teaching assistants. Morale is high and team work is very well developed. There is a strong, relevant collective vision of good practice and of the type of school they are aiming to create.

29. The systems for evaluating and improving the quality of teaching are effective. There is regular monitoring of teaching and sharing of findings, with targets set for improvement where necessary. National strategies for performance management⁵ have been implemented effectively. All members of staff are receptive to good practice and guidance and work hard to implement all curricular innovations. The skills and expertise necessary to raise achievement in speaking and listening, including the achievement of children with English as an additional language, has greatly benefited from involvement in local and national projects. The Oracy Project was used to great effect to develop strategies and methods for boosting the achievement of children experiencing difficulties in giving clear and detailed verbal accounts or explanations.
30. School development planning is based on detailed and reflective consideration of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Assessment information is now being extensively used to measure the progress of pupils and to provide an overview of the school's performance. The priorities for improvement are relevant to the needs of the school and achievable.
31. Governance is good and has improved since the previous inspection. All relevant statutory requirements are met. The school has an effective race equality policy. There have been changes to the composition of the governing body, with expertise relevant to the needs of the school being introduced. The governors are loyal to the school and have suitably high aspirations. They organise their business effectively and this is enabling them to know the school's main strengths and weaknesses and to influence its policies and priorities for development.
32. Financial management is satisfactory and money is being targeted at raising the achievement of the pupils. The school has had a delegated budget for three years and has a large surplus because of the transitional arrangements. This surplus will diminish over the next year. The school has benefited from involvement in the Sure Start initiative, which helped establish drop-in support for parents and toddlers. The Private Finance Initiative has helped the school be refurbished. The school is offering good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	426,725
Total expenditure	398,863
Expenditure per pupil (93 on roll)	4,288

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	45,649
Balance carried forward to the next	73,511

⁵ Performance management refers to arrangements for evaluating and improving the quality of teachers' work.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33. leadership and management are very good in communication, language and literacy and good in each of the other areas of learning. There is clear responsibility for each area, with good team work to implement plans and bring about improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**. The very effective provision in this area of learning has been sustained since the previous inspection. Achievement is good and standards rise from well below average on entry to broadly average among those about to transfer to the Reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided to help children develop their independence.
- Children form very good relationships with adults and with each other.
- There are very clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour.

Commentary

34. Standards overall are well below average on entry to school. Many children start the Nursery with very immature personal and social development. They are often unsure of themselves and have difficulty making their needs clear because they do not speak English. The children who have been recently admitted are generally solitary learners and rather silent until they are encouraged to contribute by the good intervention and support provided by every member of staff. Progress is very good because of the high level of general care and assistance furnished by the members of staff for the children and their parents. Good use is made of first language, particularly Sylhet, to explain tasks and routines. Confidence and the ability to work and play with others quickly grow and the majority of those in the group about to transfer to the Reception year have the personal and social skills that are typical for their age. They demonstrate good independence when choosing activities, following a personal line of interest and joining in group tasks, and will persist until tasks are complete.
35. Very good planning is leading to an appropriate balance between teacher-directed, guided and child-chosen activities and this contributes to the children's growing confidence and independence over time. Children learn to play and work together well and are encouraged to share and take turns. This is well demonstrated around the sand tray, where children take turns to funnel dry sand into bottles, waiting respectfully as each child contributes to the task.
36. A good sense of security and inclusion is created because tasks are carefully planned for different levels of attainment and experience. For example, all children had the opportunity to observe the cress they had planted and to complete drawings. The less experienced children were encouraged to make simple marks to represent the growing plant. The older children, with more developed observational and drawing skills, were guided by their teachers into drawing with care and well observed detail the tiny black seeds and shoots. Children are constantly praised, encouraged and guided by the members of staff and this builds up their self-esteem and confidence and enables children, whatever their gender, ability or background to participate fully and complete all tasks independently. Children behave very well most of the time and are offered guidance when they fail to show appropriate courtesies or when disagreements occur. Teaching is good and encourages children to understand the rules and boundaries of behaviour and work with consideration for other children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good** and this is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement is good. Standards are low on entry but quickly rise to average among the oldest children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all children are working to their potential and make very good progress because the teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Very good opportunities for speaking and listening are provided in all areas of learning.
- The use of information and communication technology to improve listening and early literacy skills is underdeveloped.

Commentary

37. Progress is very good. Almost all of the children are increasing their knowledge and skills quickly. About 60 per cent of those in the oldest group are on course to attain the national goals for early learning in this area as they come to the end of their Nursery education. This indicates very good improvement from a low starting point in English language acquisition levels.
38. Recent entrants to the Nursery tend to back up their few spoken words by pointing to what they want, showing objects and actions rather than describing them, and using facial expressions and eye contact. The oldest group, who are full-time and have been attending for about a year, are confident when talking, use simple statements and questions in English as well as their first language, and use talk to gain attention. They often begin conversations with others and take account of what they say and use talk to resolve disagreements. These conversations with other children and with adults are mostly in English, showing how quickly the bilingual children have learnt this language and the effectiveness of the teaching. The most able children are a year or so ahead of expectations and can hold length conversations, taking turns to speak, and give detailed reasons and explanations.
39. The coordinator has very clearly identified what needs to be done to raise standards, which were a serious weakness at the last inspection, and has acted effectively. Developments in all areas have brought about substantial improvement. The coordinator has formed a strong team of teachers and support staff who are highly motivated and work together well to achieve these improved standards. At the end of each school day the whole team evaluates work covered, completes assessment records, and sets targets for the next day's work. This high level of collaboration means that all members of staff know every child very well and know what the next steps in learning are to help the children make progress.
40. Throughout the day, speaking and listening skills are developed very competently through a wide range of well-chosen activities that are led, guided or supported by adults who see their main role as encouraging children to talk and extend their language skills. Children effectively build on their language experience from home, which, for a significant percentage, is in Sylheti. They get involved in a range of speaking and listening activities and soon begin to pick up simple English words, phrases and sentences. Teachers use conversation and carefully phrased questions to help children understand the significance of what they are seeing or the detail of the story. For example, in a sand tray the adult provided the English for "pouring" and "filling up" to help children describe in English what they could see was happening. Such intervention is provided by all members of staff throughout the day. If understanding is missing and explanations in English do not help then assistance in the child's first language is provided. Such work supports children's English language acquisition and helps them grow in confidence in its use.

41. Teachers place good emphasis on early literacy skills, promoting these through the activities that develop English language speaking skills and early understanding of written communication. Learning is planned around a specified number of core books, carefully chosen to develop particular skills and abilities over the four academic terms spent at the Nursery. The activities are arranged to explore key ideas from the story and to extend story vocabulary and children's use of English language to describe the events. Teachers use a very good range of visual prompts, for example cut-out figures, puppets and models to reinforce the ideas of the story, and also to help children to retell it. This guided and directed teaching is often of high quality and very skilfully managed. The majority of the oldest children are now familiar with books and willingly talk about the illustrations. Almost all of them are aware of how stories are organised, beginning to recognise some of the sounds in words and know that text has meaning. The most able can recognise a number of familiar words by sight and use them to read short sentences and phrases; this is particularly advanced for the age.
42. Children enjoy a good range of stories, which they find absorbing. They respond on a personal level when given glimpses into the real and imaginary worlds of books. For example, when the Very Hungry Caterpillar emerged as a butterfly they clapped with pleasure and a sense of wonder, moving their arms to feel the freedom and grace of the butterfly's wings.
43. Teaching in oracy⁶ sessions with small numbers of lower attaining children effectively promote good speaking and listening skills, extending vocabulary and comprehension in specific activities. For example, during the inspection, children role-played a shopping activity, choosing what they wanted to buy and offering money. They learnt the conventional courtesies and language of shopping through asking for what they want, exchanging money and goods, and from modelling the teacher's language. Children are given good opportunities to become involved in imaginative play in a variety of role-play areas, which enables them to learn and practise the language of the home, the shop and the doctor's surgery, etc. They practised the language of books in small-world activities and also as they collaborated in a drama about monsters in the outside play area.
44. The use of information and communication technology, including tapes and CD players, to enrich listening experiences lags slightly behind what is seen in other schools. Some provision is made and well used but the school is aware that the provision could be better and is working to bring about improvement. Current resources for this particular aspect do not offer a real invitation for children to listen independently to stories using recorded material, absorb their meanings at their own pace with a book or cut-out figures to help their early efforts to read and write.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**. Achievement is good. Standards are average. The provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities and tasks are very well planned to enable children to make good progress through the nationally agreed stepping stones for learning in this area.

Commentary

45. All aspects identified as weaknesses at the last inspection have been improved. Children enter the Nursery class with mathematical skills that are well below those expected for their age. The consistently good teaching results in good achievement. Almost 70 per cent of the children who have been in Nursery for three or four terms are working at the expected level for their

⁶ Oracy refers here to the development of speaking skills using teaching methods that were developed during the school's participation in a two year oracy project.

ages. Children who are learning English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers.

46. The members of staff have a very good understanding of how to develop early mathematical skills and include a wide range of activities to promote successful learning. All activities have clear learning intentions for different attainment levels and ages and the members of staff keep a watchful eye on children's progress towards them. Children's achievements are observed carefully and the information is used to plan the next activity and record their progress towards the expected goals for their learning. There is a good balance between child chosen activities and direct teaching by adults. The members of staff are careful to make sure that children attending part-time do not miss out on formal activities.
47. Children receive good individual support to help them count, recognise numbers and develop an understanding of shape, size and measures. Bilingual support is very effective, explaining ideas and new vocabulary to children who are learning English as an additional language. The adults encourage counting, matching objects and number recognition as children play independently, in teacher directed group times and through Nursery routines. Mathematics is an integral part of children's learning in all aspects of the curriculum, both in the classroom and in the out door play. Number lines, displays, puppets, pictures, books and good quality counting and sorting objects are all used to extend children's understanding of number to ten and beyond. Number songs and rhymes reinforce counting skills. Younger children count to five and are beginning to recognise numerals. Teachers set challenging tasks that extend learning well. As a result, older children confidently count to ten, recognise and sequence numbers, are becoming aware of number patterns up to one hundred and show an understanding of quantities that have more than or less than others.
48. Children are learning to use correct mathematical vocabulary to solve problems of size, shape and position as they play with two and three-dimensional shapes and small world toys. In their water play they talk with increasing confidence about different sizes of containers and are encouraged to use correct mathematical vocabulary to describe their tasks. Good role-play situations promote an understanding of number in practical situations. In the 'ticket office, hospital and greengrocers', children learn that coins have different values and that numbers indicate the time of the next train or doctors appointment. As older children create their own pictures and collages they learn to use correct names for two and three-dimensional shapes and are showing an understanding of simple patterns and sequences.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**. Achievement is good. Standards are average. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are strongly encouraged to be inquisitive and develop a responsibility for their environment.
- The quality of teaching is good.

Commentary

49. All aspects identified as weaknesses at the last inspection have been improved. Most children enter the Nursery classes with lower than expected general knowledge. The consistently good teaching results in good achievement. Almost 70 per cent of children who have been in the Nursery for three or four terms are working at a typical level for their age.
50. Teachers plan a good range of activities and experiences to enhance the children's knowledge. Children's understanding of families and their community is developed effectively. Role-play activities such as shopping, cooking and caring for babies lead to an understanding of their

place in the family, past and future events, the significance of community members and the locality.

51. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as members of staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore a wide range of made and natural materials. Good scientific skills are promoted as children observe the changes which occur as seeds grow, frogspawn turns into frogs or caterpillars become butterflies. All children develop good observational skills as they use microscopes to search for mini beasts and older children use pictures and marks to record their discoveries. Care for their class fish helps children develop an awareness of their responsibility to living creatures and fits well with developing personal, social and emotional skills.
52. Members of staff are deployed very well to be involved in practical work such as developing the children's cutting and joining skills and constructing models with large wooden blocks. Good language development opportunities arise from these activities, many of them carefully planned in advance, as the adults encourage the use of appropriate vocabulary, explaining ideas and meanings of words in children's home language, and model good language structures for children as they explore how things work and move. Independence is encouraged from the beginning of the Nursery, enabling children to select suitable materials and tools to work. The children are keen users of technology. They operate tape recorders, programmable toys, and use simple computer programs to support their learning in mathematics and literacy. Through the celebration of Festivals and celebrations of the major faiths children are developing a good understanding of their own faith and community. They learn to respect other cultures and religions through well-planned activities relating to Christmas, Easter, Chinese New Year and Eid.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**. Achievement is good. Standards are average. Teaching is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources and the provision for children to learn through physical activity outdoors are very good.
- Children have very good opportunities to use large and small apparatus and toys to support development of coordination skills

Commentary

53. The weaknesses highlighted at the last inspection have been remedied. Most children enter the Nursery with lower than expected physical development. The consistently good teaching results in good achievement. Almost 70 per cent of the children who have been in Nursery for three or four terms are working at a typical level for their age. Members of staff have a very clear understanding of the children's learning needs. Natural exuberance and energy are channelled and promoted well through planned lessons, topics, routines and daily opportunities to enjoy the very good outdoor play facilities. The provision ranges from developing hand-eye coordination in the classroom, practising cutting and sticking to improve dexterity, to a broad range of outdoor activities through which the children play together and develop strength and stamina.
54. Assessment is used effectively to check on the pupils' progress and plan their next steps in learning. This is a strong aspect of the teachers' work that has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Effective assessment is helping the members of staff to provide appropriate activities matched to children's ability, to extend learning or to revisit aspects in which children are not succeeding at the expected rate. Malleable materials, simple tools and construction materials are readily available to help children develop control over small

movements. Adults are always on hand to encourage children to improve their movements and provide good instructions and demonstrations to help them achieve success. As a result children show increasing dexterity when handling pencils, scissors, brushes, construction toys and jigsaws.

55. Careful management of the outside area ensures that children develop an awareness of each other's space as well as beginning successfully to control balls, beanbags and wheeled toys. The children run, jump and skip around energetically and are developing a good awareness of others to avoid collisions.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**, which is an improvement from the last inspection. Art was good in the last inspection and continues to be. Achievement is good. Standards are average. Teaching is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad range of enjoyable activities is planned to help children develop creative skills.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to learn a wide range of songs and rhymes.
- Accommodation is limited, so fewer opportunities for dance-drama are planned than are typically found in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

56. Children enter the Nursery with below average skills in most areas of creative development. They make good progress because of the broad range of activities which the members of staff set up to rouse children's curiosity, capture their interest and invite creative play. Many activities in and out of the classroom give children good opportunities to play together or explore on their own. Teacher-initiated activities draw children to particular areas of learning and good achievement is evident. For example, children with only one term's experience in Nursery are able to make simple marks on paper when attempting to represent a person, whereas those who are about to transfer into the Reception year are now adding detail into their drawings such as pockets and buttons and hair. Children are given good opportunities to mix and apply paint and consequently they use colour well, creating lines and shapes and a range of effects with, for example, spatter-painting and with string dipped in paint. They are often delighted with the effect they achieve, for example symmetrical butterfly wings produced by folding paper.
57. Creative work is often planned around the week's core book, which, during the inspection, was "The Very Hungry Caterpillar". Opportunities to explore the main ideas of the story through painting and drawing, three-dimensional model-making and collage support children's creative development. These also ensure that they understand the key elements of the story and the language they need to retell it. Such opportunities are essential for children learning English as an additional language. Children are beginning to talk about personal intentions in their model-making, for example when making ladybirds with their teacher or when modelling salt-dough into fantasy creatures.
58. Singing skills are developed through a range of songs and rhymes. Some are greatly enjoyed classics and others, like "Clarence the Caterpillar", are used to fit in with the overall theme of the day. In this song children brought good expression and matching actions as they admonished Clarence for his anti-social behaviour. There is some opportunity for children to respond to music through dance, though this is limited by the availability of space. For example, children worked more actively on a larger scale when they danced with ribbons to the rhythm of music in the outside play area and watched with delight as the ribbons twirled in the air.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).