

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Great Coates Nursery School**

Grimsby

LEA area: North East Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 117697

Headteacher: Mrs C Penszor

Lead inspector: Mr S Dobson

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 June 2004

Inspection number: 256256

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 children:	3 – 4 years
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	114
School address:	Station Road Great Coates Grimsby
Postcode:	DN37 9NN
Telephone number:	01472 231231
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Walmsley
Date of previous inspection:	8 February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves the Great Coates area to the south of Grimsby. Most of the children are from the local area which is a mixed area economically though few are from disadvantaged backgrounds. There are two children with statements of special educational needs and a small number of others with general learning difficulties. All of the children have English as their first language. Attainment on entry is as expected.

The school has changed in nature since the last inspection. Due to changes in the intake patterns of primary schools, this nursery now caters for 3-4 years olds rather than 3-5 year olds. In the last year, day care facilities have been developed in addition to nursery provision and some of the children attend both. All children attend the nursery on a part-time basis.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school which gives **good** value for money. The children achieve well and the majority reaches standards above those expected for their age. Their personal development is very good. The school is led and managed well.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children behave very well and have very good relationships with the adults and other children.
- There is very good care for the children and the school has good relationships with parents.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors and they have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The curriculum is generally good but it is not led sufficiently well and does not make best use of resources.
- Adults spend too much time assessing what children can do when this is mostly already known, and too little use is made of the information gained.
- The quality of teaching is good overall but is too variable, being consistently good or very good in most cases but consistently satisfactory in others.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has very successfully met the challenges of providing day care in addition to nursery education. There has been an overall improvement in the quality of teaching and the curriculum is broader and meets the requirement to teach all six areas of learning<sup>1</sup>. The quality of leadership has improved and the governors share the school's sense of direction. There remains a need to address the leadership of the curriculum.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

All children, including those who have special educational needs, achieve **well**. The majority of children work at standards which are above those expected for their age in their personal, social and emotional development and in their language, literacy and communication. They reach similar standards in their mathematical development and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Overall their physical development is better than expected at age four. They reach high standards for their age in physical control and co-ordination and their fine movements, for example holding and using tools and equipment, are at broadly average levels. Their creative development is as expected, although many make good creative use of language when given the opportunity.

Children's personal development is **very good**. They develop very good attitudes to work, to the adults and to each other because they are secure and happy and are interested in their practical independent work. Relationships with staff and other children are very good. The staff have high expectations of behaviour and the children behave very well and, for their age, show good consideration for each other. Their spiritual and social development is **good**; most of the children show great excitement and wonder in a variety of situations and they learn to get along well together as part of the school community. Their moral and cultural development is **very good**; the behaviour of most children shows that they understand what is or is not acceptable and most try to show care for others. They have learnt that there are different faiths and have experienced some religious celebrations.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** overall, though some staff consistently teach well and occasionally very well, whilst the teaching of others is uniformly satisfactory. This means that in their group time, some children are treated to lively and stimulating teaching whilst for others it is routine and does not fire their imagination or sufficiently praise their efforts. Also too often in some groups, children spend a lot of time waiting to begin tasks. However, the organisation for learning means that all children work with a number of staff and this mix of experiences ensures that all of them achieve well. The assessment of children's achievements is very thorough but is too time consuming and some staff rarely praise children for their efforts. Staff could spend more time teaching the children.

The curriculum is good and is enriched by visits and visitors. The provision for outdoor learning and particularly for physical development is very good but it is underused. In the classrooms there is provision for all areas of learning and this is changed and developed on a regular basis though some staff do not use assessment information well enough to plan for learning. The quality of care for children is very good. Links with parents are good, but a minority of parents ignores the school's comprehensive safety procedures, leaving the triple gates open and thus putting children at risk.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher has led the school well through a period of considerable change including the setting up of day care provision which runs well and enhances the quality of nursery provision. The leadership of the other key staff is satisfactory. The teachers lead the day to day planning effectively, but there is a lack of curriculum leadership. The leadership of the curriculum is in need of improvement so that planning is based on information from assessment and best use is made of time and the outside areas. The newly constituted governing body offers good support to the headteacher and has a clear view of the strengths of the school.

## PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold positive views of the school and they feel sure that their children are getting on well. A small number of parents would like more information on how well their child is getting on in school though inspectors consider that information for parents is good. The children all appear to be happy in school and many parents say that their children look forward to school days.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Ensure that time is used more effectively and that adults spend most of their time working closely with children as they learn.
- Where teaching is predominantly satisfactory, offer more praise to celebrate children's achievements and add more excitement and stimulation to the adult led activities.
- Reduce the amount of time staff spend on assessment and make better use of the information gained to plan the curriculum.
- Improve the leadership of the curriculum.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

The children **achieve well**. They make good progress and reach **levels above those expected** in all areas except their creative development where their achievements are as expected. There is very little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Children with special educational needs achieve well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and benefit from the teaching of a number of adults.
- When undertaking independent learning tasks, the children achieve well because they spend all their time working with a high level of engagement.
- Children reach well above expected standards in their whole-body physical development.
- Children reach expected levels in their creative development but reach levels higher than expected in all other areas of learning.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children come to school with a positive attitude to learning and this is maintained as they go about their work. The children have been taught to listen carefully and most of the time they do so and, as a result, they almost always know what they can or cannot do once they are given a choice. Some of the adults are better than others at enthusing the children and getting them to think for themselves and work independently. However, the organisation means that each adult directs particular activities and, other than the beginnings and ends of sessions, the children work with all available adults. This gives them a rich resource from which to draw and all children benefit. In the outdoor sessions, children work independently or with an adult of their choice.
2. Much of the work revolves around practical learning tasks which are available in the classrooms and in the small outdoor areas which adjoin them. A few of these tasks are adult led and the children make choices to go to one or another. Some, like the 'travel agency', require a few children to create a game and mostly they play together well. In other situations, the children sometimes work alone, for example 'writing' on the electronic whiteboard. When there is a good choice of activities, none of the children need to wait and they spend all of their time learning. However, some, like the big red bus, generate such interest that children choose to queue and usefully spend time anticipating and discussing their turn.
3. Children reach particularly high standards in their whole body movements. This is mainly due to the challenge offered in the outdoor area where there are parallel ropes, balance beams and blocks, climbing frames and nets, wheeled ride-on toys as well as physical activities such as digging and planting. This is highly challenging, most of the children accept the challenge and their skills build rapidly as a result.
4. In most other areas of learning, children reach above the expected standards. This marks good progress and it is due to the positive atmosphere which the adults create, where children can engage well with the work provided. Children achieve well and make good progress when adults plan work which children can develop for themselves, such as role-play, water play to find out about volume or measuring activities with a large tape. In creative development children achieve satisfactorily. Free choice opportunities are offered but children are not attracted to the materials or equipment. Where they have produced artwork, it tends to have been prescribed by adults, though occasionally children make their own decisions, for example turning a paint and brush exercise into hand painting.

## **Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children display **very good** attitudes to school and their behaviour is **very good**. Children attend regularly but punctuality is only satisfactory. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are keen to participate in activities with adults with whom they have formed very good relationships.
- Stimulating activities encourage children to work hard and with positive attitudes.
- All staff expect children to behave well and this results in very good behaviour and moral development.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Some children arrive late or are collected early which means they miss part of the session.

### **Commentary**

5. Children arrive with enthusiasm and are happy to be at school, settling quickly upon arrival. They are at ease with all the staff and parent helpers who foster very good relationships with all the children enabling them to feel comfortable and secure. Children speak freely and confidently with the adults knowing that the adults will listen and respond. Free of worries, the children are excited and keen to learn and are on course to achieve well in personal, social and emotional development by the time they move on to reception classes.
6. Imaginative themes and topics, which make good use of the very good facilities and equipment, challenge the children to work hard. The children respond positively as they did during the inspection with a bus created in a classroom to enhance the holiday theme. Children appreciate the effort staff make in creating such stimulating activities by treating the resources and fabric of the school with respect. No wilful damage was evident and the children did their best to tidy up sensibly at the end each session.
7. The staff expect high standards of behaviour whether it is in the classroom, at play or whilst lining up between activities. They consistently use good strategies so that the children know and understand what is expected of them. Staff do not raise their voices but effectively vary their tone of voice or facial expressions making it clear what is required. Children respond well and there is real enjoyment in learning with minimal disruption in the classroom. Children play well together and are tolerant of each other. They understand what is right and what is wrong. Whilst children play, adults are present but are rarely required to intervene in what the children are doing. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and there are no recorded incidents of racism. The moral development of the children is very good.
8. Children have greater opportunities to appreciate the cultures and traditions of others than at the time of the last inspection. The cultural development of the children is good. There are very few children from different faith backgrounds but the children dress up to celebrate Divali and the Chinese New Year, and thus extend their knowledge. They have experienced food from other cultures and at snack time learn of the origin of the fruit they eat.
9. Spiritual and social development are good. Children have an understanding of those less fortunate than themselves both locally and overseas. Children dressed up for Comic Relief and were able to have fun whilst showing concern. The local children's hospice and national charities have benefited from a wide range of fund raising activities.
10. The school is not required to produce attendance statistics. There is a consistent registration system throughout the school which is an improvement from the last inspection.

11. Some children persistently arrive in school late and others are frequently collected early depriving them of the opportunity to take a full part in the learning experience of school. The school permits this where there is a good reason, such as collecting young children from other schools at the end of the school day.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and the quality of the curriculum is good. Children are **very well** cared for and supported.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of **teaching is good overall** but with some variation between the groups. In some groups teaching is always good or sometimes better and in others, it is almost always satisfactory. However, learning is consistently good as children work with a good range of adults. Assessment is very thorough but is satisfactory overall as adults make too little use of the information gained.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is clearly planned so that all the staff know what is expected of the children and of themselves and can give good support.
- The staff provide a good range of practical opportunities to interest the children and support their learning but they do not use the outdoor area as well as they might.
- All of the staff expect high standards of behaviour and children respond well even when they wait too long for their 'turn'.
- All adults supporting children with special educational needs help ensure that these children achieve well.
- Adults spend too much time assessing children's achievements and too much teaching time is lost as children wait their turn in adult led activities.
- Adults make too little use of the outcomes of assessment.

### **Commentary**

12. The staff plan well. The weekly meetings, which all teaching staff attend, are very useful in giving opportunities to evaluate current teaching and learning and to plan for the next week. As a result of these meetings, all of the staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are also clear about what the children are supposed to be learning. The weakness in the planning is that there are sometimes too many learning targets which results in children being helped generally rather than being pushed on quickly in a particular area. However, when teaching is very good, as seen in the outdoor area or occasionally in a range of indoor activities, the teacher is very clear about what she wants the children to learn. She prompts them very well with good questions, for example, about the type of clothes needed for a hot holiday, and builds on their response – 'Why would you need a jumper?'
13. The staff provide a good range of interesting activities from which the children learn well. These activities cover all areas of learning. The children were fired with enthusiasm by playing in the large red 'bus' which had been created from cardboard in the classroom. So popular was this activity that some children formed a queue for their turn on the bus and, when prompted by an adult, became quite animated discussing where they thought they might go on it. Children on the bus chattered happily, looking at travel magazines which they had taken from the equally popular 'travel agent' in the other classroom. Activities in the small outdoor area are equally popular whether going for a picnic with a parent helper or playing musical instruments in the outdoor tent. Once engaged with these activities, the children set and solve their own problems through talk with each other. This has a very positive impact on their personal development and on the development of their language skills.

14. The main outdoor area is used when all of the children go out of doors together for physical play. The range of fixed resources and activities is extensive and the staff add to these by providing, for example, chalk for the floor and blocks to build ramps for cars. Children enjoy the permanent, physically challenging equipment which supports them in developing very good body control. There is also a wonderful 'secret garden' where children can let their imaginations run riot as they make games for themselves or visit the 'Three Bears'. However, all of the children go outside together for at most 20 minutes and this wonderful, stimulating environment is unused for the remainder of the session.
15. In every situation staff expect good behaviour and as a result children behave very well. All of the staff remind children about good behaviour and they listen and try to please. All staff model good behaviour in their polite manner with the children, each other and with visitors. Children copy this model. However, too many of the routines and activities in some groups involve children in waiting; waiting for the register at the start of the day, waiting for their turn in group activities, waiting to be assessed, waiting until everyone else has finished snack time before they can go outside. The children have learnt to be very patient but this is time they could use in learning.
16. All staff are aware of the special educational needs of some children and they help them as much as they can. The children's specific learning targets are known well and attempts are made, for example, through providing different tasks, to help children to meet these targets. Most of the children achieve well. The staff who specifically support children with statements of need are highly responsive, helping the children to access the curriculum.
17. Too many of the activities which are adult led are also a focus for assessment. All children are regularly assessed undertaking these activities, even when the staff already know whether they can or cannot succeed. This wastes their time and the children's and involves copious amounts of note taking. This is time that cannot then be spent engaging with the children in their learning. This constant focus on assessing all children for the same targets indicates that the staff are not fully using what they know to decide who needs the task and who needs more challenge.

***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 sessions***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	10	8	0	0	0

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

18. The above table indicates that there is overall good quality of teaching and learning. The satisfactory teaching is limited to two areas of the school where the adults appear to lack enthusiasm and energy. Whilst the sessions cover the allocated targets, the pace of teaching is slow and children lose interest. These sessions lack excitement and opportunities are sometimes missed to extend children's learning. This was seen at the start of some days when children were asked to describe the weather, taking little or no part in completing the weather chart or when they were asked to match numbers which they were clearly already able to do. However, children are polite and wait patiently for these sessions to end so that they can move to the far more interesting free choice activities.

## The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good. It provides well for children of all levels of ability. It is enriched **well** through visits and by visitors to the school. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and follows national guidance.
- There is good enrichment of the curriculum and this helps children to learn.
- The outdoor environment is challenging and exciting for all children.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is good
- Resources in one class are not organised to allow children to make choices.

### Commentary

19. Planning for learning is very detailed and thorough and enables all adults to know exactly what is intended from each activity. It takes very good account of national guidance. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The school has themes such as 'holidays' through which the curriculum is delivered. This enables good links to be made between the six areas of learning so children make connections and find it easier to acquire knowledge and understanding.
20. The curriculum is enriched effectively by visits and visitors. Children were enthralled by all the animals that were brought to the school by a local college. They held and stroked the animals and learnt how to look after them. They are curious and, for example, followed the incubation of chicken's eggs with interest and were enchanted when chicks hatched. Visits to Santa's grotto were clearly fun and the opportunity to feed the reindeer filled them with glee.
21. There is an extremely innovative, challenging and exciting outdoor environment where children can climb, balance, ride wheeled toys and engage in other physical activities. It includes a wild garden where children run and play hide and seek.
22. The provision for children with special educational needs is good. Although these children access the same curriculum as others, it is adapted to their needs. They benefit from working in small groups with learning support assistants who provide guidance and encouragement effectively but are occasionally too directive, taking away children's opportunities to be independent. Children of all abilities are catered for well and this is good preparation for the next stage of their education.
23. The accommodation is good and well maintained. Resources are good in quality and quantity. In one classroom they are well organised and children can easily access them and make choices. They are less well organised in the other room where some resources are placed out of reach or so that children cannot recognise what they are and therefore cannot easily make selections.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for the welfare, protection, health and safety of the children is **very good**. The school provides **very good** levels of support, advice and guidance for its children. There is insufficient evidence to assess the extent of the involvement of children in shaping the development of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff know and interact with the children well enabling a quick response to their needs.
- The school provides a very friendly, safe and highly secure learning environment.

- Some parents ignore clear and explicit safety procedures when entering and leaving the school.
- Very good induction arrangements help children to settle quickly and there are good arrangements when children transfer to school.

### **Commentary**

24. There are very good procedures for ensuring the welfare and well being of the children. The headteacher places great emphasis on detailed risk assessments and safe practices in all areas of school life. Good arrangements are in place to monitor and identify the presence of visitors. All the staff, including the caretaker, know the children and the high staff to children ratio enables children to quickly find a familiar adult for assistance. All staff are trained on child protection procedures, and on emergency first aid procedures.
25. Great care is taken to ensure that the individual needs of each child are well known and catered for. Each classroom has an easily accessed schedule of the children and their specific allergies, medical conditions, and special needs. Staff liaise well with parents to ensure dietary needs are met at appropriate times. Specific training and guidance has been undertaken when required, for example, in identifying a diabetic coma and in the use of an epi-pen. Staff watch the children closely at work and at play to assess their level of progress towards the early learning goals. There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff at the start and end of each session to exchange relevant information.
26. The school site is well managed with thorough risk assessments and timely maintenance. The extensive outdoor equipment is safe and well cared for. There are good areas of shade offering protection from the sun. The secret garden is a wonderful resource that is welcoming yet secure. The buildings are kept clean and tidy with no obvious hazards. Appropriate fire precautions are in place and are regularly reviewed. Very good arrangements are in place to ensure so far as possible a safe and secure learning environment for the children.
27. During the inspection, the fears expressed by a parent regarding the safe operation of the school gates proved to be well founded. At the start of more than one session some parents left all three school gates open notwithstanding the written reminders of the risks to children in the information book for parents, annual report to parents, newsletters and the large, prominent and clear signs.
28. The arrangements for the induction of children are good. Although there is no longer the space for a new parents' meeting, the school works hard to ensure that the children settle in quickly and that the parents understand as early as possible the benefits of working in partnership with the school. The school works hard in assisting children's successful transition to new schools. A detailed information pack is supplied to the new school including a copy of the child's annual report.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The partnership between the school and the parents is **good**. There are **good** and effective links with other local schools. There are good relationships with the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents like the school and are enthusiastic about what it does for their children.
- Good use is made of links with other educational institutions and the local community to enrich the curriculum.
- Good information is provided to help parents to be involved in their children's education.
- Shared arrangements with the day care provision enhance the learning opportunities for the children.

## Commentary

29. Parents were very positive at the pre-inspection meeting and the responses to the parents' questionnaire indicated an exceptionally high level of satisfaction for the work of the staff and the progress the children make at the school. Relationships between parents and staff are good with easy lines of communication. Some parents are able to assist in the school and use their expertise to enrich the curriculum. One family produced an excellent diary of Henry the teddy bear's holiday which was successfully linked into the theme for the week. This was enthusiastically received by the children and enhanced their knowledge and understanding of travel and a foreign country.
30. The local agricultural college visits the school with various animals for the children to handle such as rabbits and ducks. The college also provides eggs which the children incubate and hatch. Students from the local schools and secondary college are welcomed as part of their work experience. The local community are supportive with representatives on the Governing Body. The children entertain and sing for local residents at harvest time.
31. Good information helps parents to become partners in children's learning. They are invited into the school and can support their own or other children in learning. A detailed information book is supplied to new parents and there are termly newsletters. Information about the children is offered on three open days throughout the year and children who are leaving are given a written report. The reports are detailed and include targets in each of the six learning areas.
32. The managed arrangements for the shared provision of the nursery and day care enhance the quality of education. Resources and staff are managed very well to provide an extensive range of activities which significantly enhance the learning of all of the children.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher leads the school well and she is supported well by the governors. Other key staff lead satisfactorily. The school is managed well.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and the governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and there is a clear sense of purpose.
- Some management actions have been very successfully completed but have not had a sufficiently rapid impact.
- The school plans well for its own development and has successfully managed to change its role in the community.
- Finances are very well managed and good use is made of the funding available to provide a good learning environment.
- The leadership of the curriculum by staff other than the headteacher is not effective.
- The provision for children with special educational needs is well managed and helps children to make good progress.

## Commentary

33. The headteacher undertakes good, systematic evaluation of the quality of the school through personal review and the assessment of children's progress. Good analysis is made of the children's attainment when starting school and the head leads the staff in setting targets for children and evaluating their progress. This gives the school a very strong indicator of its success. The headteacher monitors the work of the school, formally and informally, observing the work of the staff and the responses of the children. The headteacher has successfully harnessed the support of the local authority staff in gaining an overview of quality. This has given the headteacher and governors a very clear view of areas for development. The headteacher and

the Chair of Governors have created plans to bring about improvement based on their strong desire to improve the school.

34. Some of the actions of management have been very successful and the results of this can be seen throughout the school. Spending decisions have been prudent to ensure that the children have very good resources and equipment with which to work and a great deal of effort and energy has been put into developing a wonderful outdoor play area from which the children benefit. However, this outdoor area is not used sufficiently because management has not been assertive enough in ensuring that the organisation of the day changes to best use this and other resources available.
35. Following changes to the intake patterns of primary schools, the headteacher developed plans to extend the way in which the school serves the community. As children now leave the school at four years old, this has left space to be used which has been filled by day care provision. This is now used well by the community, some of the children attending both the nursery and day care facilities. This change has caused considerable work but has been handled in such a way as to ensure that the provision enhances that of the nursery group with whom these children share a space. The project has been thoroughly evaluated and further improvements are planned.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	258356	Balance from previous year	0
Total expenditure	228200	Balance carried forward to the next	18000 <sup>2</sup>
Expenditure per pupil	4075		

36. The finances of the school are very well managed and the headteacher and governors are developing a good understanding of budget planning. Management and planning for the future is secure. The current year is the first in which the governors have a delegated budget. On a day-to-day basis, finances are very well managed by a very effective school administrator.
37. There have been a number of staff changes due to the changing nature of the school and more are imminent. At the present time, none of the staff effectively leads the curriculum or its development. The curriculum is currently organised by custom and practice rather than meeting the needs of this group of children and this leaves resources such as the outdoor area underused. Some aspects of organisation are outmoded. For example, the organisation of the sessions needs to be reviewed to give a more stimulating start to the day and more flexibility to meet the needs of the children.
38. This is an inclusive school and all children have full access to all that it offers. The special educational needs co-ordinator pays close attention to the progress which these children make and ensures that the entitlements of children with statements of educational need are fully met. There is good liaison with parents and other agencies.

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<sup>2</sup> Budget delegated to school in April 2004 and therefore no balances other than Standards Fund were brought forward.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection and the curriculum covers all six areas of learning well. However, there is room for further improvement, in particular, to make best use of the wonderful outdoor provision and to make maximum use of time and staff expertise.

#### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children develop good social skills and an enthusiasm for learning.
- The staff provide specific tasks to promote personal development but do not always make best use of the incidental opportunities to develop children's learning.
- The staff encourage positive relationships and expect good behaviour and this helps children to achieve well.

##### **Commentary**

39. Children make choices throughout their time in the nursery and this helps them to develop relatively mature behaviour. Almost all of them participate well in activities and persevere with things that they are interested in, for example a pretend picnic in the tent. They show good confidence when exploring in the garden and they form good relationship with some of the other children and with a number of adults. Many of the children show confidence with unfamiliar adults. Because of the range of activities, the children are able to develop self-confidence and most are able to initiate interactions with others.
40. The staff provide specific activities to help children to develop. One activity designed to build children's confidence was a 'pass the passport' activity in which children selected and described an item when it was their turn. Initially this interested the children but after even two attempts the children showed signs of losing interest. The development of children's confidence could have been more successfully achieved as children played in the outdoor adventure area but staff did not build upon this opportunity. Where teaching is good, snack time is used to develop children's personal skills and is a social occasion, but in the other class, it is routine and involves very little social interaction.
41. Throughout the school, adults expect children to behave well, quietly insisting that unacceptable behaviour, though rarely seen, stops. Most of the staff remember to praise good behaviour from time to time and this, linked to the good support which most of the children are said to have from home, encourages children to behave in a very civilised manner. Children show good maturity when they are asked to work in groups. They are very good at taking turns, only dissenting when they are asked to wait for far too long.

#### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are some exciting opportunities for children to develop their imaginative ideas in pretend play situations but there is some variation in the quality of provision.
- Speaking and listening skills are fostered effectively through good interaction with a number of adults.

- Early writing skills are promoted well.
  - There is a good emphasis on the teaching of early reading skills but the book areas do not encourage children to spend time there.
42. Children achieve well due to the good provision. In one class, children had great fun pretending to be a travel agent or a customer and very efficiently booked holidays for each other. They spoke on the telephone and consulted the computer to do this. In another area, they were very keen to pretend to travel on a bus, collecting tickets and driving the vehicle. Through these sorts of activities, children are able to develop their ideas and put them into words and actions. This will later form the basis of creative writing. In another activity, children purchased goods at the shop but this was not as well organised and children did not find it as engaging.
43. Teaching is good overall and all adults encourage children to articulate their ideas. Already, most have well developed speaking and listening skills and talk enthusiastically about what they are doing. They listen well to instructions from adults and to each other.
44. There are high expectations that children will write their name on their work. This is very effective and the majority of children can do so with a significant number of the letters formed correctly. Adults encourage children to write. For example, they write postcards and in doing so also learn about their address. Good emphasis is placed on recognising letters and the sounds that they make to decode or write words. The majority of children can say the sounds of all the letters in their name. Children love listening to the stories that adults read with good expression. They know how to look at books turning the pages consecutively. They enjoy looking at the books that are compilations of class work. However, the book areas are not enticing or comfortable and children are not generally captured by what they see or settle to enjoy a book spontaneously.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of practical activities which allow children to count with confidence.
  - Mathematical vocabulary is developing well through a good range of planned activities but some tasks do not generate excitement and interest.
45. Children make good progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure. The majority of children recognise most numbers to 10, and more capable children recognise higher numbers. Teaching is good overall. Games and puzzles specifically designed to support early understanding of number are regular activities that the children enjoy. Planning indicates that there is a good practical base to all the tasks provided. This enables children to consolidate ideas well before moving on to recording mathematical information. Good use is made of incidental opportunities to count, for example, during registration and when lining up.
46. The vocabulary relating to shape and measure is an integral part of the learning environment. For example, children know who is the tallest and can identify who is the taller when comparing themselves with friends. They know you use a measure to find height. They recognise shapes in the classroom environment and they are beginning to use vocabulary such as bigger and heavier appropriately. Regular assessments are undertaken and detailed records are kept of how well the children achieve. However sometimes, although the activity is good for assessment, children find it dull. At these times there is frequently a lack of praise and encouragement and this has an impact on the effort the children are prepared to put in and so distorts the assessment information.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Though some very interesting activities are planned, some teaching does not generate excitement or sustained interest.
- The staff provide lots of opportunities for the children to investigate and explore the environment, use technology and design and build artefacts.

### **Commentary**

47. The activities in the classroom and in the outdoor areas support children's learning well. Children achieve well as a result of these opportunities. Some very good adult led activities help children to develop a good knowledge of materials as well as climate and culture. In one class, when the children were asked to pack a suitcase for a 'hot holiday', they explored a number of garments and materials with their teacher. Due to good questioning, children were able to learn about warm and cool materials as well as the type of clothes which would be needed on such a trip. This work linked very well with their work in the travel agency and on the 'bus' going to the seaside. On another occasion, the activity did not have the same level of involvement and became a simple sorting task.
48. Children make good and often very good progress in this area of learning because of the very good range of activities provided. They explore and investigate in the garden and here they can observe the growth of plants and see insects and other small wildlife. There are opportunities for children to grow vegetables and flowers and they learn about plant growth. They are given regular opportunities to build using a good range of construction materials. They explore scientific phenomena when, for example, they send cars up and down home made ramps in the playground or investigate how toys move. The children have good access to information and communication technology (ICT). They make regular use of listening centres. They also have free access to computers and thoroughly enjoy using the interactive whiteboards which are available in each classroom. Regular experiences with all these types of activity give children a good knowledge of the world.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very well developed co-ordination and move with confidence.
  - Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills through a range of activities both indoors and outside.
49. Children's skills are above those expected. They climb, balance and control their movements very well. Writing and painting implements, scissors and other tools are regularly available for children to use. The control children show using these resources is at broadly average levels.
50. There is an extremely challenging and interesting outdoor area and children are delighted when they have the opportunity to explore all the equipment available. They are adventurous and climb and balance on the apparatus and are skilled explorers of the shrubbery.
51. Physical skills are used in other curriculum areas effectively. For example, children throw beanbags into containers counting correctly, and they illustrate favourite stories controlling crayons well.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some good opportunities for imaginative role-play.
- Too often the children follow the adults ideas rather than expressing their own ideas.
- There are some good art opportunities where children can develop their skills.

### Commentary

52. Sometimes, for example in role-play, children make good use of their developing language skills to develop stories and ideas with a partner or group. This was seen in the travel agency where children were retelling and embellishing on a story which they had just invented. As the story progressed, lost tickets were a source of much searching with one boy suggesting all sorts of places where they might have been left. This good work and highly creative activity came about because of the good stimulus provided by the adult and the children being able to build on the experience of telling a story.

53. However, too often the staff see creativity as an 'art' activity. Some of these are successful and there are very attractive and technically accurate paintings of different flowers on display in the nursery. It is clear from the paintings that the style and materials had been prescribed and scrutiny of planning indicates that this is the usual way of addressing this area of learning. Children have in the past made holders for Easter Eggs and here, though the products were similar, the children had used imagination in decorating their product. Provision for music making and creative dance is limited. Although the children know one or two short songs, they do not sing these with any great enthusiasm.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Children's achievement	3
<b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well children learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for children	2
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	0
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*

