

INSPECTION REPORT

KATE GREENAWAY NURSERY SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100385

Headteacher: Mr Julian Grenier

Lead inspector: Joy Richardson

Dates of inspection: 14 – 15 June 2004

Inspection number: 256577

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:	2 – 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	31
School address:	York Way Court Copenhagen Street London
Postcode:	N1 0UH
Telephone number:	020 7837 4982
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Phyllis Dietrich
Date of previous inspection:	5 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school currently provides nursery education for 31 children, mainly aged four, who all attend full time. There has been no new intake this year because transitional arrangements are in place; in September 2004, the nursery will become a Children's Centre providing integrated education and care, and family support services, for children from birth to five years old. The redevelopment, which includes building an extension, is being funded in partnership with Sure Start and the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. The school serves the Copenhagen area of Islington and levels of deprivation are high. Most families live in flats with little access to play space. The school has a mixed intake, but many children have significant individual needs. Some children start in the nursery with skills which are well developed for their age, but many have poor communication and social skills. Six children are included on the register of special educational needs, and two of these have a statement. Twenty children speak English as an additional language, and four are at an early stage in acquiring English. Around a third of the children are white British, and a quarter are of mixed heritage. A diversity of other ethnic heritages is represented. Staff turnover has been high since the previous inspection. The child:adult ratio is very favourable at present. One teacher and one nursery education worker were providing temporary cover during the inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is improving rapidly. It provides a **satisfactory** nursery education and has some distinctive strengths. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future, and is building the teamwork and shared understanding of good practice necessary to move the school forward. The quality of teaching and learning, and children's achievement, is satisfactory overall. No judgement can be made about value for money because the school did not have a devolved budget until April 2004.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is committed to the development of excellent practice in working with young children.
- The school provides a wide range of exciting activities which engage children's individual interest.
- There is too little use of planned group times to extend children's learning and sense of community.
- The school provides exceptionally well for outdoor play, and children gain much from this.
- Teaching in literacy and mathematical development is not planned well enough to ensure progress.
- The staff attend closely to children, respecting their feelings and responding to individual needs.
- There is not yet a clear view, shared by all staff, of what children can and should achieve.
- Health and safety arrangements have improved, but formal risk assessment is not yet in place.

The school was last inspected in May 1998. Improvement since then has been impeded by a lack of continuity. The school had several changes of headteacher and there has been a high level of staff turnover, illness and absence. For a period there was some uncertainty over the school's future. The school is now developing confidently under the leadership of the headteacher, appointed in September 2003, and planning well for the provision of integrated services from next year. Key issues from the last report are being addressed as part of the drive for improvement. Steps have been taken to structure learning better, to improve the use of time and space, and to clarify expectations for staff, children and parents. Many improvements are still very recent, but their impact is evident. The building of a strong staff team is underway and the nursery is now well placed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is **satisfactory** overall. In personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, children make satisfactory progress. Standards are lower in these areas than generally expected because of gaps in some aspects of learning. In knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development children make good progress and reach the standards expected for their age. The school is beginning to take stock of how well children are doing, measuring their progress along the steps in learning which lead towards the goals set for the end of Reception. This is helping the school to detect weaknesses in its curriculum and to pinpoint areas which need more attention.

Children's **personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory**. Children enjoy the nursery and they become independent and confident to explore and to investigate. By contrast, many are at an early stage in learning to participate within a group and to take pride in being part of the community. A significant minority of children lack self-control and regard for others. However, behaviour is improving because of positive teaching and reinforcement of what is expected, and the clearer setting of boundaries. Children are beginning to respond well to routines, for example for lunchtime and tidying up.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. The teaching provided by individual staff is often good, but the organisation of learning means that children do not benefit consistently from this. Staff talk well with children, developing a good rapport with them and extending their play. However, some staff lack expertise, particularly in literacy, and need more guidance. Group times, though valuable, are not yet systematically planned to build on what children can do. Staff observe and record children's response to activities. Assessment is developing but it is not yet being used consistently to guide planning and teaching, or to monitor the pace of children's progress.

The curriculum is broad and the nursery provides a wide range of exciting activities which are well tuned to the interests and abilities of young children. In particular, the outdoor provision and the encouragement of exploration and investigation are exemplary. However, there is not enough attention to literacy, including stories and reading, language play and awareness of sounds, or to mathematical development. The emphasis on children choosing and initiating activities means that children can miss out on important experiences if they do not show an initial interest. Parents are being drawn into an effective partnership with the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher is leading the school well with determination to do the best for children, drawing effectively on support from the local education authority and external advisors. He has recognised weaknesses in the school requiring urgent action and has a clear vision for the future. The school improvement plan is being implemented to good effect. The staff team is being strengthened to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and a staff development programme is in hand. The school runs smoothly, finances are managed effectively, and funding has been secured for developing the school site. Governance is satisfactory and the governing body communicates well with parents, actively seeking their views through the use of focus groups.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally well satisfied with the school. They have been widely consulted this year and their views have been taken into account, creating a pattern of good, open communication. Parental concerns about behaviour have been addressed and they are pleased with the nursery's more structured and purposeful atmosphere. Children enjoy coming to school and take pleasure in the activities on offer. They revel in the opportunity to be safely adventurous in the school's outdoor environment.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the use of planned group times, to build children's learning and sense of community.
- Plan teaching in literacy and mathematical development more thoroughly to ensure progress.
- Further develop shared understanding by all staff of what children can and should achieve.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Carry out the required risk assessments.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children's achievement is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children do particularly well in exploring and investigating the world around them.
- Early skills in reading, including awareness of sounds, are underdeveloped.
- Children learn to count, but there are gaps in their mathematical development.
- They achieve well in developing their creative and physical skills.

Commentary

1. The school does not have records which show children's attainment on entry. Its view is that this varies widely but is well below average overall. Although some children start with skills that are well advanced for their age, many enter the nursery with poor communication and social skills.
2. In knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development, children do well and reach standards which are broadly average for their age. Their achievement is satisfactory in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. However, there are gaps in their learning in these areas and standards are below average.
3. The school lacks a clear view of children's progress over time. The staff keep notes from observations of individual children. However, the school only began in January 2004 to record progress against the expected steps in learning that lead towards the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). Recent analysis, carried out by the headteacher, has served to point up gaps in achievement and provision, and to provide a baseline for measuring progress from now on. Although many children have now spent five terms in the nursery, the school has not mapped out the progress to be expected over time. When organising activities, the staff do not always take account of what individuals can or cannot do, or of the teaching needed to help them take the next step. The school recognises that the expectations of some staff have not been high enough, and is working to address this.
4. Children achieve well in practical activities, and gain a wide range of valuable experiences and skills. This is evident in rich opportunities to explore the natural world and the way things work. Children enjoy creating pictures and making models, and testing out their physical skills. Adults encourage them to ask questions, to wonder and to explore, and this talk and discussion extends children's learning.
5. Despite the breadth of activities on offer, children are not guided in a way that ensures the systematic extension of their learning, particularly in literacy and mathematical development. Children are introduced to stories, but they do not have a rich enough diet in this respect. They learn to recognise, and are keen to write, the letters of the alphabet, although they are given little help in forming letters correctly. There is not enough emphasis on hearing, saying and playing with sounds and rhymes, in preparation for reading and writing. Children's mathematical learning is not built upon consistently to ensure that children make progress.
6. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. The achievement of children who are acquiring English as an additional language is satisfactory. Throughout the nursery, children benefit from the large number of adults who are able to spend time talking with them and helping them to make the most of the activities provided. There is no significant difference in the achievement of children from different ethnic backgrounds.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory overall. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy and become absorbed in the activities provided.
- They show curiosity and are keen to learn.
- When asked to help, children show pride and enjoyment in taking responsibility.
- Some children lack self-control and social skills in participating within a group.

Commentary

7. Children like the nursery and are enthusiastic about the activities provided. At the start of the day they usually settle happily, but there is a lack of routine to help this transition and to give a sense of community. Children show independence in choosing what they would like to do. With adult support, they develop the confidence to try new activities. Children often become engrossed and absorbed when activities are well structured, and they persist in the tasks they set for themselves. The ability to contribute within a group and to work collaboratively is less well developed. There has been little emphasis on the provision of planned group time, although this is increasing. Children respond well to opportunities to take responsibility, for example when given precise goals for tidying up at the end of sessions. Children volunteer to help prepare snacks and set the tables for lunch. They carry out these responsibilities with enjoyment and pride, developing a sense of ownership.
8. On admission, children's personal and social skills are not always well established. Children develop good relationships with staff. Where expectations are clear and consistent, children progress steadily in abiding by rules. The staff are being given guidance about how to set and to maintain boundaries for children, and how to manage children's behaviour positively. The school recognises that there is more to do in this area, but progress is being made. Parents' concerns about unkind and aggressive behaviour, which they felt was often overlooked by staff, have been much reduced. There are frequent occasions when individual children lack self control and have outbursts of anger and difficulty in sharing or taking turns. However, the approaches used by most staff are generally effective in finding a resolution and a better way forward.
9. Children are curious and interested in the world around them. The school helps to expand their horizons, for example by going on visits. Children explore foods from different cultures, for instance making Moroccan biscuits, and tasting noodles provided by a Chinese parent. However, such activities are not always planned in enough detail to extend cultural awareness and to draw on the diversity of children's experiences. Children are helped to appreciate the natural world and this is a significant strength. The garden, where children grow seeds and look after plants, is a source of interest and wonder. Children enjoy making and listening to music, although they do not readily join in with singing together.
10. There is no national comparative data for attendance at nursery schools. From the beginning of the current year, overall attendance has been calculated and this shows an attendance rate of 87 per cent over the past two terms. There has been significant absence for medical reasons. This, together with the difficult social circumstances of some families, and one child taking an extended holiday, depresses the overall attendance rate. The school monitors attendance closely and is working for further improvement. It maintains an effective register of those present, it is quick to follow up reasons for absence and it works well with parents to foster regular attendance. Children are expected to arrive between 9.00am and 9.30am. There are some late arrivals, but the number is being reduced. Children can be collected at 3.00pm or 3.30pm but this arrangement disrupts the organisation of group activities at the end of the day, and limits the time for communication between staff and parents.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of learning and of teaching is satisfactory overall. Assessment is satisfactory, though it is not yet used to full effect to guide children's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff use resources well to engage children in a range of worthwhile activities.
- The effectiveness of teaching is constrained by the nursery's organisation.
- Teaching is often good within planned 'key group' sessions.
- The planning of teaching and the assessment of learning lack rigour in ensuring progress.
- Staff talk well with children, helping them to explain their ideas.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
		13	5	3		

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

11. For most of the day, children choose their own activities, moving freely between them. Much work has gone into ensuring that activities are well structured so that children become purposefully engaged in them. For example, during the inspection, children were fascinated by pulley systems for lifting water, exploring how to make showers. They were involved in 'Euro 2004' football games, complete with numbered shirts and red and yellow cards, and keeping a scoreboard. They made their own musical instruments. The richness of these activities reflect the knowledge and enthusiasm of the staff in charge. Children become absorbed, and staff talk with them well to extend their learning.
12. However, activities are not always well developed, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Literacy does not permeate other activities sufficiently. Children enjoy writing, but handwriting skills are not systematically developed. They turn to books, for example for pictures of football, or to identify insects, but do not readily make use of the book area. The children are fascinated by letters, but there is little emphasis on learning to distinguish sounds. Mathematical opportunities are not consistently exploited, and play in the 'shop' is not structured well to encourage mathematical development.
13. Children meet in 'key groups' at the end of each session, taught by a teacher or nursery education worker. Although the planning of these sessions is not yet consistent or systematic, the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and often good. Teaching at these times is generally well tuned to children's needs, contributing to their learning and sense of belonging. Resources are used to good effect, as in the telling of stories with props to help understanding and to hold children's interest. Staff recognise the need to help children co-operate socially within a group, whether in 'going on a bear hunt' or as 'five little elephants walking on a line'. Children enjoy sharing stories, counting together and moving to music. Although the use of these sessions is developing well, there are not yet enough planned opportunities throughout the day for group work, to ensure progress by all children.
14. Staff changes, the emphasis on following rather than leading children's interests, and a reticence, now being overcome, about setting boundaries for children have all contributed to a

lack of direction in teaching. This is now being addressed. However, where teaching is unsatisfactory, staff lack the expertise to extend learning purposefully; activities do not have clear learning intentions, related to the capabilities of individual children.

15. Staff are beginning to monitor children's progress along the 'stepping stones' towards the early learning goals. Assessment is improving, although it is not yet being used to full effect to guide planning and teaching, and to question whether children are progressing as well as they could. Staff make extensive observations of children, but these are not sharply focused to identify what has been learned and what should come next.
16. Children choose whether or not to participate in activities. This sometimes means, as with a visit to the local library where children were spellbound by stories, that those who choose not to participate miss out significantly as a result. As noted at the time of the previous inspection, the shortage of planned teaching with identified groups of children leads to uneven progress.
17. The identification of special educational needs is effective. Individual education plans have clear targets. The staff share a good awareness of children's individual needs and this helps children to make steady progress. Support from the headteacher is good, although additional learning support assistance is not fully effective.
18. The staff are aware of the needs of children who are acquiring English as an additional language and children make progress in speaking. The staff give support, for example in providing pictures and props to aid understanding. However, many staff lack training and expertise in helping language acquisition, by first as well as additional language learners, and the use of the home language in supporting learning. There is not enough encouragement for children, of all language backgrounds, to play with language and to join in with songs, rhymes and familiar refrains.
19. A strong team is now being built, but the modelling of good practice in teaching has been lacking. As a result, some staff have been out of their depth in attempting to manage children's learning without a clear understanding of how to do this. Procedures for performance management and the professional example being given by the headteacher, with the support of the new class teacher, are helping to develop a shared vision of what can be achieved.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. Opportunities for children are enriched well by visits out of school. The quality of accommodation and resources is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for outdoor play is a significant strength.
- There is insufficient planning for language and literacy, and mathematical development.
- The school enriches learning by providing many first-hand experiences for children.

Commentary

20. The curriculum provides a broad range of curricular opportunities in accordance with statutory requirements. Provision for the six areas of learning follow the guidance suggested for the Foundation Stage.
21. The headteacher has taken many steps to improve the quality of the curriculum. He has taken a lead in planning and assessment to develop a clearer overview of provision across all the areas of learning. He is being well supported in this by the new nursery teacher. Staffing difficulties, which have slowed the pace of progress, are being overcome. The nursery has been tidied and re-organised, to give activities more structure and to make resources accessible to children. However, there is not yet enough planning to ensure systematic coverage of all the aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, and steady progress in these areas of learning.
22. Children enjoy a range of play activities that excite their interest, arouse their curiosity and provide worthwhile opportunities for learning. The outside area, although in need of refurbishment and currently limited by building work, is put to extremely good use. Children enjoy being out of doors, and the activities provided there do much to promote exploration and investigation, and creative and physical development. The school enriches children's learning by taking them out on visits, for example, to a car wash centre, science museum, canal, railway station and fire station. They learn about travel using public transport, and about keeping safe, for example when walking to local amenities. The children benefit greatly from these first-hand experiences.
23. Children with special educational needs have well-designed individual education plans with realistic targets to help them make progress. Staff take great care to ensure that they have full access to all the activities provided.
24. Provision for children who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. The school draws on external support, provided through the ethnic minority achievement grant, to assess the needs of children who speak English as an additional language, and to guide its provision for them. The school recognises that there is more to be done in developing staff expertise in dealing with children's individual language needs.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care for children, and provision for their welfare, safety and protection, are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory support and guidance, and is good at taking children's views into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are vigilant and alert to children's needs.
- Improvements to safety and security have not yet been extended to include risk assessments.
- Staff listen and talk well with children, showing understanding and concern for their well-being.
- The management of behaviour is becoming more consistent and effective.

Commentary

25. The changes made following a recent review of security and supervision have resulted in a more secure environment. Health and safety has been recently reviewed leading to many improvements. Suitable measures have been taken to minimise hazards associated with the current building works. The school is aware of the need for risk assessments and plans to do these once work on the buildings and grounds are complete. At present there is no governor with designated responsibility for health and safety.
26. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Staff are vigilant and aware of their responsibilities. There are suitable arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies and prescribed medicines. Evacuation procedures are practised with sufficient frequency to ensure that everyone knows what to do. Requirements for the testing of appliances and equipment used in the school are met.
27. The school works closely with support agencies to meet identified needs. This level of support extends to parents who need help to overcome difficulties that impact on their children's welfare. The school has introduced the use of Makaton signs to facilitate communication for those children who have problems with spoken language. There is strong support for children with special educational needs. The advisory teacher for inclusion in the early years works closely with staff and parents, and attends twice-termly reviews of children's individual education plans.
28. The school is aware that parents have not been happy in the past with arrangements to help children settle in. These are now being improved and there are effective arrangements for children to get to know the school before they start. The role of the 'key worker' as the main point of contact for children and parents is being developed, although staff changes this year have resulted in a lack of continuity. However, relationships are generally good, and children readily turn to any of the adults in the nursery when they need help. The high staff to child ratio allows for frequent interaction between adults and individual children and extended conversation. Arrangements for children transferring to primary school have been planned well to help a smooth transition.
29. The staff are becoming more confident and consistent in managing children's behaviour. The headteacher has helped in this by discussing, with individual staff, the effectiveness of strategies used by him in incidents captured on video. Staff are developing a clearer view of their responsibilities, and of the need to be alert to all children as well as supervising a specific activity. The headteacher and the new nursery teacher model this well for other staff. The staff are developing skills in observing and recording children's development, although not all are fully confident in guiding learning and progress.
30. Children receive a good introduction to health education. They are encouraged to eat healthy food, drink sufficient water and to wash their hands before meals. Lunch is a happy and sociable occasion. Children eat well and gain much from the guidance of adults and from talking with other children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the community. Links with other schools are developing satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' views are actively sought and taken into account in working to improve provision.
- Parents value the growing partnership with the school, which is helping their children.
- Community links enrich the quality of provision, and children's learning.

Commentary

31. Parents have a growing confidence in the school and its provision for their children. They are particularly pleased with recent opportunities, through focus groups, to share views and concerns. Action taken as a result has formed the foundation of a good partnership to support learning. The headteacher has established a good partnership with parents, including those whose children have special educational needs, or are learning English as an additional language.
32. Parents value information provided about how to help children at home. Children now have 'home reading and writing packs' which include books to share, guidance for parents, and a scrapbook for children's writing and drawing. The school harnesses parental support, for example by a briefing for parents prior to a science museum visit. Parents feel welcome in the school. Many take advantage of the opportunity to come in on Tuesday mornings to work with their children and introduce younger siblings, although few use the time, as originally intended, to share books with their children.
33. Parents have open access to their children's profile records and, where these are up to date, parents find them interesting and informative. There is a formal meeting between key workers and parents each term where progress and areas for development are discussed. The governors' annual report to parents provides good information and reflects the sense of partnership in working together for the benefit of children. A notice board for parents is kept fully up to date. There is no school brochure, and the overall pattern of communication with parents is being reviewed for the coming year.
34. The school has good links with other agencies within the community. It is working closely with Sure Start and the Neighbourhood Nursery initiative in funding the new provision of integrated services as a designated Children's Centre. Funding has been secured from local sponsors for the redevelopment of the external environment. The school is linked with the Primary Care Trust so that children and their parents can share personal problems in confidence away from school. The children benefit from frequent visits to local amenities, including the nearby public library.
35. The school has recently developed procedures to ensure children make a smooth transition to primary education. Staff from local primary schools visit the nursery well in advance of transfer arrangements. As well as meeting the children, they discuss both academic and personal development with their teachers. The visits children make to primary schools in the term prior to transfer are planned well to ensure that they are familiar with the school, its routines and staff. Children with special education needs visit more frequently as needed. Local authority advisory staff work with the schools to ensure that suitable individual education plans are in place when children start in the reception year.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good. The quality of management, and of governance, is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is turning the school around and successfully setting its direction for the future.
- Systems have been put in place to secure the smooth running of the school.

Commentary

36. The headteacher took up his post in September 2003 after a period of turbulence in staffing and leadership, and uncertainty over the school's future. He has been working with determination to close the gap between his vision of excellence, and his assessment of practice on the ground. Parents were concerned about poor behaviour which went unchallenged. Activities lacked structure, and children and staff lacked direction. Staffing problems, which continued into this year, made it difficult to establish consistency and continuity, and impeded the pace of change.
37. The headteacher has worked with determination and tenacity, drawing on strong support from the local authority and expert advisers, in order to secure improvement. His evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses has been clear sighted, and complacency has been challenged. There were some false starts in attempting to introduce complex planning and assessment systems and teamwork for which the school was not ready. However, much has been achieved and the impact of change is becoming increasingly evident. Parents comment that the nursery is now more settled, the learning environment has improved, children's behaviour is better managed and activities have greater structure and purpose.
38. The school has a comprehensive improvement plan, and this is being implemented to good effect. The headteacher has been rightly concerned to bring about rapid improvement in current practice while also preparing for the school's new configuration. Performance management procedures are in place, and the headteacher and external advisors have observed and worked alongside staff in order to develop their skills. The school is committed to the continuing professional development of staff.
39. Leadership by other key staff has been limited. However, a new class teacher joined the school this term. This has been an important step in building a cohesive team for the future, with a shared vision of excellence in early years practice. She is contributing to the leadership of teaching and learning, alongside the headteacher, so that leadership is becoming more broadly based. Recruitment for September is now complete and the school has significantly extended the range of its expertise.
40. Plans are well advanced for the school's new designation, from September 2004, as a Children's Centre, and work on the building extension has been well managed to minimise disruption. The headteacher has been effective in securing funding, and drawing on expert advice in planning the redevelopment of the outside environment. The school runs smoothly, and the administrative officer plays a major part in this. The school did not have a devolved budget until April 2004. It is now managing its finances efficiently, with support from the local authority.
41. Governance is satisfactory. Governors actively support the school and are committed to its future development. They accept the headteacher's evaluation of the school's performance and the need for improvement. They communicate well with parents, as seen in the attractive and informative annual report. The governing body ensures compliance with statutory responsibilities, except in the securing of formal risk assessment in relation to the school's site, and activities in and out of school.
42. The headteacher co-ordinates effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. He has a very clear understanding of individual children's needs and has put in place good procedures for identifying needs, setting targets and reviewing progress. He works well with parents in helping children to succeed. The school draws on local expertise and systems for assessment in providing for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The management of this provision is satisfactory but the school recognises there is more to be done to increase staff expertise and support for children.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are confident and eager to explore, and they become absorbed in worthwhile activities.
- Children's sense of belonging to the nursery community is not strongly developed.
- Behaviour is variable, but children are learning to accept boundaries and to exercise self-control.

Commentary

43. When children start in the nursery their skills in this area of learning are not well developed. Children's achievement is satisfactory and they make progress. Standards are below those expected in aspects of this area of learning, including children's behaviour and self-control and sense of community, but these weaknesses are being addressed. Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall.
44. Expectations of behaviour have not been clearly set out and consistently maintained throughout the children's time in nursery. Children lacked sufficient awareness of boundaries and of the needs of others. The staff, led by the headteacher, are now managing behaviour more effectively. Staff help children to abide by rules and routines and to make acceptable choices, although some staff lack confidence in doing this. Children benefit from a sense of calm consistency among experienced staff, and understanding of their feelings. This helps them to accept guidance. Children know they are valued as individuals and the positive responses they receive from adults lead to growth in their self-esteem.
45. Activities are generally organised effectively so that interest is stimulated and maintained. Personal independence is promoted well. Children learn to choose what they would like to do independently and they do this well. They often become absorbed in what they are doing, for example when working with pulleys to create showers, and they persevere to achieve the goals they set for themselves. In caring for plants and butterflies, they learn sensitivity and show interest in how things grow.
46. Increasing attention is being paid to the development of children's social skills and sense of community, because these have been underdeveloped. Lunch arrangements encourage children to talk and listen in a group. Some, but not all, staff help children to use knives and forks correctly, to show good manners, and to think of others, for example in sharing food fairly. Children take pleasure in knowing what to do, as when they succeeded in cutting a sausage with a knife rather than resorting to fingers.
47. Children are learning to tidy up at the end of sessions and some are beginning to take pride in doing this well. Many enjoy volunteering for tasks, such as helping to prepare snacks or set tables for lunch. The school is aware that more thought needs to be given to the use of planned group times, and to arrangements at the start and the end of the day, in order to strengthen children's participation in social routines and community activities.
48. Since the last inspection, there has not been enough attention to teaching good behaviour and setting clear expectations for children. The school is now rising to the challenge of doing this.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are eager to discuss and explain the activities that they enjoy in the nursery.
- There is not enough opportunity to enjoy stories and rhymes and to play with language.
- Children's knowledge of sounds is underdeveloped.
- Children are interested in recognising and writing letters and names.

Commentary

49. The achievement of children, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. However, standards are below average overall and there are gaps in some aspects of children's learning.
50. The listening skills of children entering the nursery varies widely. A few find it difficult to speak to others, and nursery staff have developed the use of Makaton signs which enable less articulate children to communicate sufficiently for their needs. Many children use spoken language well to talk about what they are doing and to involve others in their games and activities. Most are confident in talking with adults.
51. There is not enough encouragement of imaginative play with words so that children develop their vocabulary and their enjoyment of language. There are too few planned opportunities for children to explore stories, rhymes and poems, to distinguish sounds within words, and to enjoy alliteration and language patterns. Children are interested in letters and many know the letters in their names, but they do not link these with sounds within words. Children develop early writing skills, attempting to record their ideas through making marks on paper, and in drawing and painting. Many can write their names, and a group of boys eagerly copied the letters to make 'Arsenal' and 'England', motivated by their interest in football. Children are encouraged to talk about their pictures and explain what these represent. They are not routinely helped to hold a pencil well or to form letters correctly.
52. Children learn to handle books and they enjoy listening to stories on occasions in 'key group' sessions. A visit to the local library by a small group each week provides a rich source for literacy development. Children are invited to listen to stories read by the librarian, to talk about characters and events and explain similar experiences which they have shared. For example, children spoke enthusiastically about visits to the zoo in response to an exciting story about animals from other countries. However, children do not have enough regular opportunity in the nursery to become involved in stories and to enjoy expressive story telling. Parents are invited to a weekly 'drop-in' session, but this has not yet been developed as planned to encourage the sharing of books with children. Home-nursery packs encourage children and parents to take books home. Although many do this, some children have little opportunity to share books at home.
53. The nursery has a well-resourced book area, but children rarely use it on their own. However, books are included in the resourcing of many activities and older children can distinguish between story books and books containing information. Children are eager to look through books, for example about football, or insects, in connection with activities they are engaged in. For example, books on seeds and seedlings were consulted by children who were keen to find out about 'growing things' as part of the job of looking after the flourishing plants in the school garden. Children, and parents, are being encouraged to focus on the words which children see and recognise in the world around them.

54. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although uneven in quality. The best learning is in response to skilful questions from experienced teachers who lead children to think for themselves, and to explain their ideas as clearly as they can. Some staff are less sure about how to extend talk with children. Children are taught how to listen as part of a group by taking turns without calling out. However, many are shy about making an individual contribution to the whole group, and they do not have enough opportunity to join in with rhymes and chants and repetitive refrains.
55. Children who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and staff use resources well, such as props for stories, to help understanding. Staff have had some valuable training but lack expertise in helping children in the early stages of learning to speak a language very different from their mother tongue. Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, need more planned teaching involving word play, learning simple songs and rhymes, repeating sounds and connecting these with words.
56. As at the time of the last inspection, the planning of development in language and literacy, to ensure progress week by week, is not given a high enough priority. Leadership in this area is underdeveloped, and assessment is not yet being used consistently to monitor progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to count and they enjoy using numbers.
- Activities are not well planned to extend mathematical learning.

Commentary

57. Children achieve satisfactorily overall in this area of learning, making progress in counting and using numbers. However, standards are below average because work is not well developed to build children's skills and to ensure that they are applied and extended.
58. Children are interested in numbers and are keen to learn to count. They help themselves to 'two pieces of fruit' at snack time. When waiting for the teacher to produce a 'surprise' in key group time, children shut their eyes and chanted numbers up to ten, and a few persisted beyond this. Children enjoyed trying to count the legs on plastic minibeasts, in order to identify those with six legs as insects. They are beginning to recognise numerals, as when ordering the numbers on football shirts. They attempt to write numbers, strongly motivated by the urge to record the goals they have scored, but they are not sure how to form them correctly.
59. Most children are making the progress expected in counting, although the use of numbers as labels is not widely reinforced within nursery activities.
60. There is little specific planning of activities to extend children's mathematical development and to build on what they can already do. Some activities, such as playing in the shop, include opportunities for counting and for weighing, but these are not well developed. Children have many opportunities for construction, but there is insufficient focus on shape, space and measures, and the use of related mathematical vocabulary as they make and build. Adults help children to make comparisons, for example, talking about 'more' and 'less', 'heavier' and 'lighter', 'shorter' and 'longer'. However, there is not enough opportunity or challenge for pupils to explore mathematical problems within games and activities.
61. Teaching is broadly satisfactory, and sometimes good when it has clear mathematical purpose, or when the member of staff is knowledgeable about stages in mathematical learning. Children with special educational needs are supported so that they make satisfactory progress. Staff ensure that children who speak English as an additional language are helped to participate

in activities, such as making purchases in the shop. However, the planning of key group times and of independent activities does not ensure that the learning of all children is extended at an appropriate level. Staff know what children can do, for example recognising that some are mathematically able and can add small numbers in their head. However, organisational arrangements make it difficult for this to be taken into account, and activities are often repeated at the same level. Assessment is not yet being used to full effect to guide teaching.

62. Provision for children's mathematical development is not as strong as at the time of the previous inspection, and leadership responsibility in this area is not clearly defined.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given very good opportunities to explore and to investigate.
- Learning about the natural world is developed well.

Commentary

63. Children achieve well and gain knowledge and understanding of the world in line with expectations for their age. Some aspects of the school's provision in this area of learning are very successful. Children explore and investigate with confidence and curiosity, and the outdoor area is used very effectively to extend opportunities for this. Children explore the properties of sand and water. They play in the large sand pit. They recreate the beach at the seaside with sand, shells and blue water. They propel boats along waterways, raising and lowering them through locks as seen on the nearby canal. During the inspection, children learned to operate large-scale pulley systems for raising and lowering water. The equipment was set up very well by the nursery education assistant, who involved the children in solving problems. They took great delight in making water spray from 'showers', and turned with enthusiasm to cleaning windows.
64. Children are interested in food. The school encourages them to try new tastes and to think about healthy eating. Children were fascinated by the wide range of fruits provided for their snack. They discovered the inside of a lychee, and discussed the tastes of unfamiliar tropical fruits. The garden is a source of great interest as children watch the growth of vegetables which they have planted.
65. The school is very good at helping children to learn about the natural world. Children were intrigued to follow the way that caterpillars turn into butterflies. They are interested in the worms and spiders they find in the outside area. They learn how plants and animals grow. For example, when helping to water the vegetable garden, children were curious to know why plants need water. For children with little access to green space, the outside area at the nursery is a haven of discovery and delight.
66. Children enjoy using the computers and are confident in making pictures and playing simple games. With help, a group of children tackled the challenge of programming the 'roamer' to follow the route of the hungry caterpillar, working out how to get it to the 'apple' or 'pear'. In making models, children explore how to cut, shape and join materials, for example creating boats and helicopters and musical instruments. They become absorbed in working out how to achieve what they want.
67. Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall and often good. Adults facilitate and enable exploration by setting up resources well to engage children in purposeful activity. They talk well with children about their learning, encouraging and responding to questions, and linking new learning to children's previous experiences. Children are taken out on visits and are aware of

features in the local environment. On occasions, opportunities for learning are missed, as when children tasted noodles and beansprouts from a Chinese restaurant without relating this to beansprouts they had grown themselves, or to learning about China. The school recognises that children's awareness of time and place and different cultural practices are not as strongly developed as other aspects of this area of learning.

68. Leadership and management in this area is satisfactory and strengths have been maintained since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to be safely adventurous.
- A wide range of activities encourages the development of physical skills.

Commentary

69. Children develop their skills and achieve well in physical development, reaching standards in line with those expected for their age. The outdoor area, though in need of refurbishment, is put to very good use in offering children a range of physical challenges. Children enjoy the opportunity to test and extend their skills, gaining confidence through practice. Children are encouraged to play outside in all seasons when the weather permits.
70. Children steer tricycles around the curves of pathways, exploring how fast they can go while making the turns, and some have learned to balance and ride a bicycle. Although the climbing equipment is fairly limited, children make good use of it. They learn to balance in walking along a plank, to steady themselves on the curved surface of a barrel and to jump off safely. They jump off steps and low walls.
71. Enthused by a nursery education worker, and the excitement of 'Euro 2004', children practise kicking, dribbling and shooting at goal. Many of the boys can control the movement of a ball well for their age. However, few girls were seen joining in.
72. Children learn to manipulate tools and materials with control and skill. Children successfully cut up fruit for the snack. They were proud of themselves at lunchtime when they managed to cut sausages with a knife rather than using fingers. They use scissors well, and show independence and determination in manipulating materials, for example when using paper and sticky tape to wrap up a parcel, or fixing boxes together to make a model. They use pens, felt tip pens and paintbrushes for drawing, painting and writing. However, they are not given systematic help to hold a pencil well and to practise the physical movements needed for making letters.
73. Children enjoy moving to music, in doing the actions to songs, although they rarely join in with the singing at the same time.
74. Teaching is satisfactory. Staff are encouraging, as when an adult repeatedly helped a child with special educational needs to climb, balance and jump, so that he became increasingly confident. However, because children choose their own activities, some spend far more time than others on activities which promote their physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children explore a wide range of materials and use them to express their own ideas.
- The school is working to extend children's engagement in imaginative play.
- Children enjoy music, but are not confident in singing together.

Commentary

75. Achievement is good in creative development because staff respect children's individual responses and encourage them to experiment and to develop their own ideas. As at the time of the previous inspection, children's work shows standards which are broadly in line with the expectations for this age.
76. Children have access to a range of materials which they use for their own purposes. Children play with dough, rolling, cutting and decorating shapes with great concentration, until they are satisfied with the results. They use junk materials for constructing models, imaginatively investing them with character as they turn boxes and sticky tape into houses or headdresses. They work intently with building blocks and Lego.
77. They enjoy making books, as seen in one about dogs, with pictures and attempts at writing which the child was able to explain. They elaborate drawings and painting, such as self-portraits and pictures of football games, showing observation and appreciation of pattern.
78. Children engage in role play based on their experience, setting tables, making 'toast' for breakfast, and putting 'babies' to bed. Staff work to give children the experiences necessary to enrich their play, for example taking children with special educational needs to visit a real shop, so that they could relive this in shop play at school. Much of the play by boys revolves around television fantasy heroes and fighting, and experienced staff work hard to develop this into richer and more imaginative forms of role play.
79. Stories such as 'We're all going on a bear hunt' and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' are re-enacted with props, for example in key group sessions. However, children tend to be spectators rather than actors in these scenes and the school recognises that they need more encouragement to join in and to become imaginatively involved.
80. The skilled musicianship of a student on the staff is adding much to children's creative development. Children explore the sounds of instruments and make their own. They are being introduced to a repertoire of songs, but they do not readily join in singing in a group. This is an area for development.
81. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Although not all staff are equally skilled, the teachers seen are good at fostering creative development through providing resources, and helping children to express their ideas and realise their intentions. The new nursery teacher is developing effective leadership in this area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school *	8
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); not applicable (8).

* No judgement can be made about value for money because the school did not have a devolved budget until April 2004.