

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **McMILLAN NURSERY SCHOOL**

Nelson

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119095

Headteacher: Gillian Wroe

Lead inspector: Kay Charlton

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 January 2004

Inspection number: 256876

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3-4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	108
School address:	Railway Street Nelson Lancashire
Postcode:	BB9 9AG
Telephone number:	01282 612709
Fax number:	01282 693358
Appropriate authority:	Lancashire Local Education Authority (LEA)
Name of chair of governors:	Mr George Adam
Date of previous inspection:	26 -28 October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

McMillan Nursery School is an LEA maintained nursery that caters for children aged 3 and 4 who attend either morning or afternoon sessions. Children are admitted in the August following their third birthday. It is over-subscribed and currently there are 108 on roll. The children attend for one year before moving to a number of different primary schools. The area that the nursery serves has increasingly high levels of social disadvantage. The children come from mainly Asian or white European backgrounds. There is a high percentage who speak English as an additional language. There is a very high percentage of children with statements of special educational needs. These are mainly associated with learning but also with visual and hearing impairment, and also mobility. Children's attainment on entry is very varied but, overall, it is low especially in the area of communication, language and literacy. Since the time of the last inspection the nursery has extended its services to include a 'Stay and Play' group where parents and children can learn together. There is also an 'Offsprings' group for children aged 2 to 4 that provides a breakfast club, a lunchtime club and an after-nursery club as well as a holiday play scheme. The 'Offsprings' group runs sessions at the same time as the nursery and this means that it is possible for children to attend the centre for a full day by attending both. The nursery has strong links with 'Sure Start' who provide programmes for families of pre-nursery aged children. Nursery staff, supported by a local college, also provide a wide range of courses for parents. To date, the LEA has been the 'appropriate authority' and managed the nursery's budget. From April 2004 the governing body will take on full delegated powers of governors and will manage the overall budget. There have been very few staff changes since the last inspection. Since 1999 the nursery has been awarded a School Achievement Award on three separate occasions.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1718	Kay Charlton	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector	
1516	Michael Warman	Team inspector	Special educational needs Personal, social and emotional development Mathematical development Creative development

The inspection contractor was:

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>24</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**McMillan Nursery School makes very good provision** for children. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well even though standards are generally below those expected nationally by the time they leave the nursery. The nursery is very well led and gives very good value for money.

The nursery's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The staff work very well as a team. They use their individual strengths to advantage to ensure that children of different backgrounds and abilities achieve very well.
- There are significant strengths in the development of children's skills in speaking and listening.
- Children enjoy coming to the nursery and behave very well.
- The headteacher provides calm and determined leadership and seizes every opportunity to help improve the nursery.
- Opportunities to develop children's growing understanding of number are not always exploited to the full.
- The nursery provides very well for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Arrangements for the care and welfare of the children are very good.
- At a time when governors are about to take on responsibilities for the budget the ways in which they check the overall effectiveness of the nursery are not sufficiently systematic.

The nursery has continued to make good improvement since the last inspection in October 1998. All the issues raised have been addressed. As a result there are much improved procedures for monitoring teaching, learning and children's progress. Staff have increased their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) and all policies have been reviewed. The nursery has also been very proactive in widening the services it offers to families since the time of the last inspection.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

**Children achieve very well** even though overall standards are still below those expected by the time they leave the nursery. From a low base, particularly in the area of communication, they attain the expected levels in many areas of the curriculum.

In the areas of personal, social, emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development children achieve very well. In all of these areas, other than communication, language and literacy, children are on course to attain the levels expected by the time they leave the nursery. In communication, language and literacy children make very good progress, especially in developing their skills in speaking and listening, but because many start from a very low baseline children's attainment overall is still below that expected by the time they move on to school.

In mathematical development children achieve well overall even though standards in mathematical development are below those expected by the time the children leave the nursery. They achieve very well in learning about shape, space and measures and make particularly good gains in developing mathematical language. However, there are occasions where they could achieve still more in developing their understanding of early number.

Children of different backgrounds and abilities are all included very well and children with special educational needs, more able children and those who speak English as an additional language all achieve of their best.

**Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** They have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. They show a high regard for staff and each other. The nursery makes every effort to encourage good attendance and punctuality and is successful in helping children build up patterns of good attendance before going to school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. Teaching is very good,** resulting in children learning very well. All teaching seen was at least good and the great majority very good. Staff have high expectations of all children and they work with a clear sense of purpose. They constantly review children's achievements and then target what each child needs to do to improve ensuring that activities are well matched each child's level of understanding. The quality of staff's questioning to extend children's thinking is a noticeable strength and has a particularly positive impact on the development of children's skills in speaking and listening. Teaching and learning in the area of mathematical development are good overall, with particular strengths in the teaching of mathematical language in the area of shape, space and measures. However, opportunities to develop children's growing understanding of number are not always exploited to the full.

The curriculum is very good, and very good levels of care and welfare are provided for children who learn in a safe and secure environment. The partnership with parents is very good. The links with the other groups in the nursery are also very good and ensure a good level of continuity for children who attend these as well as the nursery. There are good links with the wider community and the nursery is suitably extending these.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall leadership and management of the nursery are very good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and this is a key strength. She is very clear about the future development of the nursery and is actively trying to increase the involvement of other agencies in the community in order to extend the services the nursery can offer to children and their families. She leads very well by example and the way she challenges and supports colleagues is noticeable. This has led to a number of staff undertaking extended professional development. The procedures used by the senior team for monitoring and evaluating the work of staff are much improved since the last inspection and are now very good. All staff carry specific roles and responsibilities and together they work on curriculum development and this has proved to be very effective. Staff are very enthusiastic about their work, they are reflective and are committed to the future improvement of the nursery. Governors are very supportive of the nursery and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met. The governing body is well organised but, particularly as governors take on further responsibilities, the procedures for checking the overall effectiveness of the nursery are not sufficiently systematic.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE NURSERY**

Parents hold the nursery in high regard. Virtually all speak very highly of its work and feel that their children are making good progress. They are unanimous in thinking that children's behaviour is good, teaching is good, children are treated fairly, they learn to become mature and independent, a good range of interesting activities is provided and that the nursery is well led and managed. The inspection team's findings confirm the very positive views of the vast majority of parents. Children are proud of the nursery.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that all opportunities to develop children's understanding of number are fully exploited.

- Develop a more systematic programme of monitoring so that governors can check on the effectiveness of the nursery's work.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning**

Children achieve very well even though overall standards are still below those expected nationally by the time they leave the nursery. From a low base, particularly in the area of communication, they attain the expected levels in many areas of the curriculum but standards are still below those expected in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development.

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

- In the areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development children achieve very well.
- Children develop their skills in speaking and listening very well.
- Children with special educational needs, those who are more able and those who speak English as an additional language are very well supported and achieve very well.
- There are occasions where children could achieve still more in learning about number.

#### **Commentary**

1. The nursery gives particularly high priority to children's personal, social and emotional development and children quickly develop confidence and independence. They learn to make choices about the activities they will undertake and, overall, are well on course to attain what is expected of them by the time they go to school. The strong focus given to this area forms a firm foundation for all other areas.
2. In communication, language and literacy children benefit from the consistently high expectation set by the staff across all activities. Very good levels of staffing ensure that a lot of individual attention is given to children. As a result those who are less confident, those who speak English as an additional language and also more able children are all challenged at the appropriate level and achieve very well.
3. Children develop their skills in speaking and listening particularly well. They listen attentively in small and large group situations and they grow in confidence in speaking and use talk effectively as they work alongside each other. Bilingual support is provided for those children who are at the early stages of learning English and this is very effective in helping children make progress across all areas of learning.
4. Early reading skills are developed very well. Children listen to stories with delight, and they often join in as they recognise familiar or repeated phrases or sentences. Most concentrate well on the pictures and words and on the explanations which teachers provide. More able children know that print goes from left to right in English and recognise familiar words, for example, in titles of books. All children handle books with care and replace them after use. Children develop a good awareness of the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make.
5. Early skills in writing are developed very well. Children start from a particularly low base in this aspect. Staff make every effort to help children catch up but standards are still below those expected by the time the children leave. Children gain confidence in making marks for a purpose, for example, when they write shopping lists and telephone messages in the home corner. They are encouraged to write their name on their work and they make good attempts at doing this. Staff give particular support to those children with special educational needs who often find difficulty with pencil control. They place suitable emphasis on children using

phonic knowledge to help them write and many children begin to use this, for example, when making a book about the animals in the zoo. Through the efforts of the nursery improvements in the area of writing are evident over time.

6. In the mathematical area of learning most children can match and sort colours and also name simple two dimensional shapes well. They have a good understanding of capacity and can identify 'full' and 'empty' containers and they realise that it takes many small containers to fill one large one. Most children use mathematical language, such as 'big' and 'little', 'short and tall' and 'under and over', very well. They show curiosity about numbers and many recognise the names of numerals up to five and more able children recognise numerals up to ten and beyond. All children are establishing understanding of early number concepts but overall standards are below those expected and more could still be achieved in this aspect.
7. The wide range of interesting opportunities provided for children encourages them very well to develop good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In creative development children also achieve very well. By the time children go to school they are well on course to attain the expected levels in these areas.
8. The provision for physical development is very good and children achieve very well in all aspects, particularly in developing their skills in balancing and climbing.
9. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. At that time children's achievements were judged to be good and now they are very good. The extra focus on monitoring of teaching and learning and also the increased emphasis on assessment has been instrumental in bringing about the good improvement.

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

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good. These areas continue to be strong features of the nursery as at the time of the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The staff team has created a climate for learning where each child is valued and where very positive attitudes to learning are established.
- The nursery's positive approach to behaviour works effectively and ensures that children behave very well.
- Very good relationships are a central feature of the nursery.
- Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

### **Commentary**

10. Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. Children enjoy coming to the nursery and show great levels of enthusiasm for the activities provided; they particularly like working outdoors. The staff value each child as an individual and they have built up a climate for learning that successfully develops children's confidence and self-esteem. Children respond very positively to the high expectations of staff and develop good levels of personal responsibility. They show respect for others and work and play in an atmosphere of racial harmony. Children with special educational needs take part in all activities confidently and with a sense of success. Parents value the attitudes and values expected by the nursery staff.
11. Behaviour is very good, and this is confirmed by parents' comments. There is a clear behaviour policy that is operated consistently by staff and any instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly. There have been no exclusions. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour is working well.

12. Very good provision is made for children's spiritual development. By providing activities that help children appreciate the wonders of the world, staff encourage children to develop understanding. For example, during the inspection staff replaced sand in the sand tray with snow and the children delighted in the different feel in texture and the difference in temperature. Children develop a sense of empathy with others and they are successfully encouraged to develop a sense of pride in their own individual backgrounds and beliefs.
13. Provision for children's moral development is very good. They are taught right from wrong and are given clear moral direction by all staff that encourages very good behaviour. All adults in the nursery act as very good role models and they take time to talk any issues through so that the children learn why it is inappropriate to do certain things. Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop self-discipline, for example, they know that equipment has to be put away after use and they do it often without being reminded.
14. Provision for children's social development is very good. The nursery provides many opportunities for children to show initiative, for example, by initiating their own activities in the role-play area or acting as helpers for their group. Relationships throughout the nursery are very good. Staff work very hard to help children develop patterns of social interaction, for example at snack time, and children learn to work and play together well. There are many opportunities for children to exercise choice and responsibility and they learn to do this effectively. A good example of this is when they come into the nursery at the beginning of a session and choose the activity they will start with on that day. Children learn very well about the different people who help to support the community, such as the fire service, local supermarket, dental services and Guide Dogs for the Blind. They benefit greatly from social occasions such as parties and celebrations for festivals. They also help to look after the garden at the local sheltered housing.
15. Provision for children' cultural development is very good. Children show a good respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. They benefit from the wide range of activities, including visits out of the nursery, that help them to understand about different cultures. The nursery is a very successful multi-cultural community that prepares children well for life in society.

### **Attendance**

16. Since children in the nursery are below statutory school age there are no expected norms for attendance. The nursery staff make every effort to encourage good attendance and are successful in ensuring that children establish good patterns of attendance by the time they go to school.

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

The quality of education is very good and has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching is very good and, as a result, children's learning is also very good. Teaching is never less than good and there is a very high proportion of very good teaching.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff work very well as a team.
- The quality of staff's questioning to extend children's thinking is a noticeable strength.
- Teaching ensures that children of different backgrounds and abilities are challenged in their learning.
- Staff provide imaginative and motivating activities and encourage spontaneity in learning.

- There are occasions when staff do not fully exploit the opportunities to develop the number aspect of mathematics.
- Assessment is used very well to inform planning this ensures that all children are suitably challenged.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	4	0	0	0	0

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

- Teaching is very good overall. There is a direct relationship with children's learning which is also very good. There are examples of very good teaching and learning in all areas of learning.
- All staff work very well together and form a strong team and make effective use of each other's strengths, for example, in using their bilingual skills and their skills in music and ICT. All are well qualified and experienced in working with young children. They have secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and have high expectations of all children. They constantly review children's achievements and then target what each child needs to do to improve. As a result, the quality of staff's questioning to extend children's thinking is a noticeable strength.
- Staff turn everyday situations into positive learning experiences, creating spontaneity in learning. This was seen when staff encouraged the children to discuss and describe a sudden hail shower that hit the nursery. They are knowledgeable about the interests of children of this age so that they provide imaginative activities which motivate the children. For example, the introduction of a realistic toy tiger and tins of 'tiger food' when reading the story of 'The Tiger who came to Tea' fascinated the children.
- The quality of teaching is underpinned by close, very supportive relationships and the children are managed very well. They respond very well to the staff's high expectations showing increasing levels of concentration. Staff are encouraging and good humoured in their conversations with children and, where they need to, they quietly reinforce the nursery's rules. This approach prepares the children well for their move to primary school.
- Overall, staff give very good attention to the development of children's skills of speaking and listening. All staff are clear when giving instructions and take every opportunity to engage children in conversation. They provide good role models for children's spoken language and effectively help to broaden their vocabulary. Taken overall, reading and writing are encouraged very well. Children refer to texts and make good attempts at mark making.
- Staff often draw children's attention to mathematical concepts as they go about their activities. For example, during snack time the children were asked to talk about the shape of the waffles they were eating and on another day they were asked to count the fruit and 'Hoola Hoops' as they were being given out. Overall, the number aspect of mathematics is developed well but practice is not consistent across all activities and some important opportunities are missed.
- The staff are deployed effectively, with all sharing day-to-day responsibility for supervising particular activities and for teaching groups of children. Routines and procedures are well established and staff are well organised; consequently no time is wasted and the sessions run smoothly. Staff use resources very well so that children's learning is enhanced; particularly good use is made of the outdoors.

24. Overall, staff use assessments of children's learning very well and noticeable improvements in this respect have taken place since the last inspection. They make notes about the children's achievements as the children go about their activities. This means that they are very clear about what the children are already able to do and adapt activities well to their level of understanding. Staff meet every afternoon after school to assess children's progress during the day and review planning for the following day.
25. Overall, the teaching of children with special educational needs is very good and children are making very good progress towards their individual targets. These children are given a very good support and staff work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that the children are successful in their learning.
26. The teaching of children from ethnic minorities and those with English as an additional language is very good. All staff understand the needs of these children and make very effective provision for the development of their English language skills. Children are very well supported by staff who speak Punjabi, the major community language spoken by the children. This effectively increases the children's self-esteem and successfully promotes their involvement in activities.
27. Careful account is taken of the need to stretch the most able children and this is evident in the work undertaken, for example, when one girl succeeded in writing her own name she was then challenged to write her brother's also and she made a good attempt at this.

## **The curriculum**

Provision is very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good provision is made for children's personal, social and health development.
- Strong emphasis is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all children are included in activities.
- The nursery provides a wide range of interesting activities for children.
- Resources and accommodation are good.
- Opportunities to develop children's understanding of number are not always maximised.

## **Commentary**

28. The nursery provides a wide range of interesting activities that promote the early learning goals in all six areas of learning and effectively engage children in their learning. Areas of learning are inter-linked very well, without losing their discrete nature, and very good use is made of practical experiences and the outside area to enrich children's learning. Constant review of the curriculum is undertaken and carefully considered innovations are introduced. Overall, the curriculum ensures that children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
29. All staff show a strong commitment to the principles set out in the nursery's aims concerned with equality of opportunity and inclusion. All children have equal access to the curriculum and are included very well, for example, by ensuring children with mobility difficulties are included in all visits out of the nursery. The requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice are fully met. The nursery works well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that children with special educational needs are fully supported.
30. Communication, language and literacy are given a high profile so that overall children's basic skills are developed very well. Very good strategies are used to help children develop good skills in speaking and listening. This benefits all children but especially those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Most aspects of mathematics are developed systematically but opportunities are sometimes missed to develop

the number aspect. This area has been highlighted as a key priority for development by the nursery staff.

31. Strong emphasis is given to children's personal, social and emotional development. The effective routines and structures within the nursery result in the good level of responsibility that the children take for their own learning. The 'key worker' system is important in helping children build up trust in the staff and learning that their views or concerns will be treated sensitively. Emphasis is placed on establishing healthy eating habits.
32. There is a wide range of enrichment activities. Many visits out of the nursery take place, for example, to the library, supermarket and places of interest. Visitors to the nursery also help to broaden the curriculum, such as local artists, a visitor from the circus who showed the children how to juggle and spin plates, and another who brought a selection of owls for the children to hold.
33. Resources are good overall. There is a particularly good level of staffing that ensures that the children receive a lot of individual attention. Learning resources are good and are very well organised to make their use easy by children and staff. The accommodation is good. The building provides a bright and interesting learning environment with good use of displays. The outside area has been well planned to ensure that learning can take place in all areas of the curriculum.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The care, guidance and support provided by the nursery are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good arrangements for children's welfare, health and safety.
- Staff know the children very well as individuals and provide very good support in their learning.

### **Commentary**

34. Daily routines are well planned and carried out very carefully. All decisions concerned with the children's health and safety are based on thoughtful risk assessments, for example, not to play in the outside area when there are icy conditions underfoot. Health and safety procedures are suitable and thorough maintenance ensures that the building and equipment are safe. There is a named person responsible for child protection procedures and comprehensive arrangements are in place so that everyone is well informed about what to do if a situation were to arise. The nursery places a high profile on encouraging children in developing a healthy lifestyle and is at present in the process of applying for a Healthy Schools Award.
35. Staff have very good relationships with children and monitor children's progress very well so that they have comprehensive understanding of each child's achievements and development. Staff visit every child's home before they come to nursery so that they already have a good idea where children may need support even before they start. There are very good links with feeder groups, such as 'Offsprings', and this helps to ensure continuity in children's learning. Throughout their time in the nursery children receive constant praise and encouragement from staff and this builds children's self-esteem and supports their achievements very well. The nursery's 'key worker' system ensures that children have one member of staff who knows each and every one of them very well indeed and who provides a very good point of contact for parents and carers. An effective system is in place whereby staff discuss the next stages of children's learning with parents on a regular basis and targets are set for the future. Good links are established with the wide range of schools to which children transfer to ensure smooth transition.
36. Staff make every effort to value children's views. They respect children and listen carefully to what they have to say and adapt the provision accordingly to meet their individual needs.

37. The nursery continues to provide high levels of care as at the time of the last inspection. The ways in which the nursery monitors children's progress have improved as has the level of support which staff are able to provide for children's learning.

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

The nursery has very good links with parents and good links with the community and other schools. This is much the same picture as seen at the time of the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very effective partnership with parents.
- Provision to parents of information about the nursery and children's progress is very good.
- The nursery has very good procedures to ensure satisfaction and to deal with any concerns or complaints.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the nursery's provision.

### **Commentary**

38. The partnership between parents and the nursery is very good. The overwhelming majority of parents have very positive views about the nursery and feel they are comfortable about approaching staff with questions, a problem or a complaint. Communication with parents is very good. The nursery provides a very well-written prospectus containing full information on the activities that take place, gives full explanations on early learning goals and informs parents of the many opportunities that are available to them to participate in their children's learning. Regular well-produced newsletters are provided and the governor's yearly report covers all expected areas and is well written.
39. The nursery produces annual reports on children's progress, which are of good quality and evaluative. It also provides good opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with a key worker, and staff are available to see parents at any time if they have any concerns.
40. The nursery makes good attempts to involve parents in their children's learning. Each child is visited at home prior to admission and every parent is invited to a 'taster day', together with their child, where full information is given about the nursery, its aims and policies.
41. The nursery arranges a very large number of courses for parents including a 'Starting Out' course for parents of newly enrolled children, computer courses and courses on the six areas of learning to help parents to identify ways in which they might support their child's learning. These courses are well attended and much appreciated by parents.
42. Links with the community are good. The nursery provides extra facilities for parents such as the 'Stay and Play' group and 'Offsprings' and has particularly strong links with these. Children from the nursery tend gardens in the local senior citizens' home and sing for the community at Christmas and other times. Children make frequent visits to the local library and the nursery is involved in a 'Sure Start' programme. Visitors from the community to the nursery include road safety officers, health visitors, speech therapists and dental hygiene workers and the nursery is also involved in the local 'Smiling for Life' project. The nursery is suitably widening its links with the community so that it is able to provide a wider range of facilities in future.
43. Links with other schools and educational institutions are good. Staff from the local primary schools visit the nursery on many occasions at the end of the year to spend time with the nursery children. Good arrangements are made for nursery children to visit all of the feeder primary schools before they start primary education in the autumn term. Transfer

arrangements for nursery pupils to the next stage of education are good. As a result, nursery children start their life at primary school with confidence. Links with one of the local colleges are good and the staff from there provide computer courses for parents of the nursery children. One of the lecturers at the college acts as a governor of the nursery.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good as is the overall management of the nursery. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a strong belief in helping all children to achieve of their best and she sets a very good model for staff.
- The very good teamwork of staff supports the nursery in going from strength to strength.
- The systems to manage the nursery underpin its smooth running.
- Governors do not have a systematic procedure for checking on the nursery's work.

### **Commentary**

44. The headteacher sets a very good example and provides strong leadership that gives a clear sense of educational direction and purpose to the nursery. She is very well supported by her deputy and other staff who work tirelessly as a team to secure the future development of the nursery. In this way the nursery has achieved a School Achievement Award for three years in succession. An important next step includes further development of the links with other agencies in the community in order to extend even further the services the nursery can offer to children and their families. The nursery's aims are well thought out and they are reflected in practice. They place a suitable emphasis on children achieving their full potential. The nursery very effectively promotes equal opportunities so that children of different backgrounds and abilities are included very well in all activities. Children who have identified special educational needs are important members of the nursery community and are treated by all with consideration and respect.
45. Communication systems work well so that the nursery is managed very smoothly. The school improvement plan is the result of consultation with staff and governors and is very well matched to the nursery's needs. Priorities and targets for development are clear and action is suitably based on the identified needs. Very good use is made of data about patterns and trends in children's achievements to inform the plan, for example, the nursery has placed improvements in children's understanding of number as a key priority for development. There is considerable investment in training staff and this ensures that staff keep up to date and have the necessary skills and knowledge to support children's learning and welfare. Performance management is in place and is being used very well to underpin whole school improvement. Induction arrangements for new staff are very effective.
46. Governors are very supportive of the nursery and have worked well within their present remit to help shape the direction of the nursery's work, particularly to help raise its profile in the community. Their systems are well organised and they have ensured that a range of appropriate policies have been agreed. Governors have ensured that all statutory responsibilities are met. Along with the staff of the nursery they have also ensured that the small budget managed by the nursery has been used to best effect. Governors have some procedures in place to gauge the effectiveness of the nursery's work but these are not

sufficiently systematic and generally they are over-reliant on the headteacher providing them with information. They are very aware of the need to extend their role as a 'critical friend' in the light of their changing responsibilities for the devolved budget in future.

47. Overall, there has been good improvement in the overall leadership and management since the last inspection. The internal systems for monitoring and checking are now very good. Those of the governing body now need to be extended so that they can more thoroughly monitor the work of the nursery.

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

All areas of learning are led and managed very well and this ensures successful developments over time. Overall, there has been good improvement across since the last inspection. The number aspect of mathematics is not as well developed as other aspects of provision.

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

#### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**. Children with special educational needs are supported particularly well. Consequently, their self-esteem is enhanced and they are able to take part in all activities confidently and with a sense of success.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work very well as a team and are consistent in reinforcing high expectations of children
- Children develop confidence and independence, and learn to socialise very well.
- Children behave very well.
- Staff show care and concern for children's well-being.

#### Commentary

48. Children make particularly good gains in this area so that most are likely to achieve the standards expected by the time they leave the nursery. Teaching is very good and staff are consistent in their high expectations of all children.
49. Routines are very well organised such as the registration time at the beginning of sessions, and this helps to ensure that children develop confidence, for example, as they add their name to the registration board. Teachers and adults treat children fairly and with respect and they develop very good relationships with the children. In this secure environment children quickly develop their independence and learn to socialise very well, for example, by taking turns and sharing equipment.
50. Activities are set up very effectively by the staff so that children learn to choose what they would like to do and all show that they can do this very well. Children concentrate and persevere with their tasks, and opportunities are provided so that they can return to work that is incomplete on another occasion, for example one boy returned to his model of a fire engine at various times to ensure that he achieved the best possible outcome.
51. Behaviour management is very good and staff are consistent in reinforcing the agreed behaviour policy. It is noticeable how well children behave in the nursery, for example, when they sit 'quietly' as a group as they listen to a story or when they are playing with bats and balls in the outside area.
52. Very good opportunities are provided for them to learn sensitivity, for instance, by caring for plants and animals. It was noticeable how carefully they ran their hands over various plants in the garden in order to pick up their scent.
53. Staff show care and concern for children's well-being and very effectively promote their personal independence. As a result children learn to go to the toilet on their own, wash their hands and most can put on their coats to go out to play. At snack time they all show good manners and wait patiently until they are invited to choose what they would like to eat. Staff place strong emphasis on children learning to say 'please' and 'thank you' and children respond to this very well.

54. The children effectively develop a sense of community. They learn about different cultures and religions, for example in their recent work about Chinese New Year and in topics about Christmas and Eid. The strong links with parents help to support this aspect very well.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**. All children, including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are more able, achieve very well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strong team of staff have consistently high expectations of children and as a result children achieve very well.
- Staff place strong emphasis on developing children's skills in speaking and listening. They are confident to use spontaneous situations to stimulate learning.
- Staff are particularly skilful in their questioning and they take time to listen to what children have to say.
- Books are referred to at every opportunity.
- Staff use assessment very well to ensure that activities are well matched to children's understanding.

### **Commentary**

55. Teaching is very good and children make very good progress and achieve very well. Staff use assessment very well to ensure that activities are well matched to children's understanding. Strong teamwork ensures consistency of practice. Even though overall standards are below those generally seen at the end of the time in the nursery this represents significant progress, particularly in the area of speaking and listening.
56. Staff use every opportunity to develop children's skills in speaking and listening. Staff are confident to use spontaneous situations to advantage, for example, when they engaged children in an extended conversation about a large car transporter that appeared outside the nursery. They present very good models of language to children and are particularly skilful in their questioning and they take time to listen to what children have to say. Where children are not yet using spoken language staff successfully make use of a wide range of strategies often using pictures, signs and gestures to engage the children. For those who speak English as an additional language very effective strategies are used to aid children's understanding using their home language. Throughout the nursery most children respond to adults' questions well; a few are beginning to use complete sentences in their answers and also initiate conversations of their own. All listen to stories, rhymes and poems with interest and many answer simple questions about what they have heard, for example, when listening to a story about a snowman. Children enjoy role-play and this very effectively encourages them to develop their skills in speaking and listening, particularly as staff often work in this area along with the children helping to extend their vocabulary.
57. Children make a very good start in early reading. They enjoy looking at books and because staff ensure that particular books are considered in depth, such as the 'Dear Zoo' book, children build up their ideas about their favourite stories. Children treat books with care and staff effectively draw their attention to features of books and text so that they begin to understand that the title tells you a lot about the book and that text operates from left to right. Children also learn to distinguish different sounds within words. It is noticeable that throughout the day at least one member of staff sits in a comfortable area reading with small groups of children or individuals. This plays an important part in increasing children's interest in books and awareness of the ways in which text works. Factual books are at hand and staff

teach children to find answers to questions in them, for example, whether an elephant has a tail or not. The home/school lending library is run very effectively to help children's reading development.

58. Children's early skills in writing are developed very well. Many have very limited skills in this area when they start nursery and staff work hard to help improve children's skills over the year they are in the nursery. A wide range of activities helps them develop hand-eye co-ordination and by the time they leave the nursery many learn to write their names using recognisable upper and lower case letters. Staff have high expectations of children and they all teach letter formation consistently and very carefully, for example, when children write their names on their paintings. There are many opportunities for children to use writing as a means of communication and in a range of ways, for example when drawing their sisters and brothers on a large sheet in the outdoor area, they begin to ascribe meaning to marks on paper.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Activities are well matched to children's level of understanding.
- There is good provision for practical activities.
- Good emphasis is placed on children learning mathematical vocabulary.
- Opportunities to develop the number aspect of mathematics are not always fully exploited.
- Very good assessment procedures have highlighted the fact that children's understanding of number can be improved.

### **Commentary**

59. Children of different backgrounds and abilities achieve well. Overall standards are below those expected by the time children move to school but this is from a low starting point. Staff work very well as a team and encourage children to think. They focus on children using correct mathematical language and this works well. They use assessment effectively to ensure that activities are well matched to children's understanding.
60. Well-focused interaction by staff encourages children to learn about shape, space and measures in interesting practical situations. For example, staff encourage children to talk about the shape of the utensils in the home area and also encourage them to create patterns and shapes of their own using many small shapes to make up a larger shape. In the outdoor area children enjoy delivering different shaped cards, such as triangles and squares, to boxes positioned around the area that have the same shape on the outside. Further very good opportunities are given to children to develop their spatial awareness through, for example, building with large blocks and moving around an open area in music and movement sessions. In all these ways children build up good understanding of shape and space and many are able to recognise and name shapes such as squares, triangles and circles and show good appreciation of position. Children also learn about size through many activities and staff regularly draw children's attention to concepts such as 'big' and 'little', 'long and short', 'tall and taller' and many children apply this learning in different situations. Especially through sand and water play and when transporting fir cones around the outside area, children develop good understanding of capacity and many can demonstrate their understanding of ideas such as 'full and empty' and 'half full'.
61. Staff encourage children to sort and match very well. Children did this very effectively when they sorted toy wild animals into particular enclosures. The staff drew children's attention to the criteria for sorting and then questioned the children very effectively so that they quickly

appreciated what was required and then they set to and moved the animals into the relevant area. This activity also helped to develop the children's spatial awareness very well as they had to fit different-shaped animals into similar-sized spaces to see how many they could get into a particular area.

62. The nursery's very good assessment procedures have highlighted the need to increase the opportunities for children to develop their skills in number and this is a key focus in the school improvement plan. There are many activities set up where children's understanding of number is the main learning outcome, for example, when they counted out the number of animals that were to be hoisted up in the pulley system and then checked out to see if the same number came rattling back down the drain pipe. These are very focused activities and staff are clear what they want the children to learn and because of this the children learn very well. In other activities where the key focus is given to another area of learning practice is less consistent, for example, in activities to encourage children's physical development, staff do not always seize the opportunity to develop children's understanding of number. This was noticeable in the activity where children balanced across stepping stones. On this occasion a perfect opportunity was missed.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop their skills of observation very well.
- Staff question children in a way that challenges their thinking. They encourage spontaneity in learning.
- The use of ICT is much improved since the last inspection.
- Children enjoy the activities.
- Children design and make some very good models.

### **Commentary**

63. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well. Most are on course to attain the expected outcomes for children this age. There is a good range of very well-planned, interesting opportunities that give a good focus to 'first-hand' experience and successfully build on children's natural curiosity in wanting to find out about the world in which they live. Emphasis is placed on children finding out by using all their senses. Staff make particularly good use of unexpected situations to encourage spontaneity in learning, for example, when it snowed the children were fascinated and the staff used their curiosity to advantage.
64. Children learn to explore and observe very well, for example, when noticing how snow melts and how a snowman can live on if he is put in a freezer but how a snowman of the same size simply melts away when put in an oven. Careful questioning by staff, where they used the correct scientific terminology, helped the children begin to think about what would happen to each before going to the fridge or the cooker. They also drew out similarities and differences in the final outcome very well so that children gave some very thoughtful responses. Staff often encourage the children to make drawings and paintings of their observations, for example, of daffodils that had just been brought out of a dark cupboard and photographs show drawings of frogspawn changing into tadpoles. These reflect the good quality of the original observation. Very good opportunities are provided for children to find out why things happen and how things work. Particularly noticeable is the pulley system in the outdoor area and also the system whereby Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout and then was washed out.
65. Children enjoy building and constructing using different materials and do this very imaginatively, for example, when building a large motorway using wooden blocks. Children often plan out their models ahead and make choices about the most appropriate ways to join

materials together. Models of a fire engine and an elephant showed particularly good awareness of the need to adapt materials and techniques to achieve the desired effect. The way in which staff question children so that they think in depth about their work means that the children try even harder to improve the finished product.

66. Staff provide regular opportunities for children to use information and communication technology including the computer, headphones and a programmable toy, and children effectively develop understanding in this area. This is a noticeable improvement since the last inspection when staff lacked expertise in this aspect of the nursery's work.
67. Children develop a good sense of time and this is evident in the work they do when they compare themselves as they are now to what they were like as babies. They also investigate items from the past and compare them with similar items of the present, for instance, those associated with washing clothes. They develop a good knowledge of place and this is demonstrated well in work about visiting the local area and a nearby farm. Particularly good work was undertaken when children pretended to plan a route through a forest.
68. Visits are used very well as a stimulus to support this area of learning. It is noticeable how well all children, including those with difficulties with mobility are included in these. Children very effectively learn about a wide range of different cultures and beliefs and a wide range of work is undertaken about festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Eid.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Adults challenge the children very well. They question children in a way that helps them to improve.
- Children with special educational needs are included very well.
- Children play together very well and develop good awareness of space.

### **Commentary**

69. Children make very good progress overall and their attainment on leaving the nursery is in line with what is expected. There have been good improvements in the outdoor provision over time and this has supported development in this area.
70. The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have very good relationships with children and their interaction is supportive and yet challenging. This enables children to feel secure but they are also encouraged to experiment and try out new things and new ways of moving. The quality of interaction ensures that children improve their skills. Emphasis is placed on children extending their vocabulary through all activities and children learn to talk about their activities and realise how improvements might be made. Children use a good variety of wheeled vehicles, which help them to develop good control and co-ordination in pushing, pulling, pedalling and steering. They are developing a good awareness of space. They use the climbing frame carefully and imaginatively. They climb confidently and slither through tunnels easily. When working on the large equipment, children successfully experiment with different ways of moving. Children learn to balance, for example, when balancing across a set of stepping stones.
71. Regular dance sessions are undertaken and children readily appreciate how to move along with the beat. They develop clear understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Children work and play together very well, and are considerate and sensitive towards each

other. They take turns and share equipment and develop good skills when using small equipment, such as bean bags and balls. They learn to use tools and materials effectively showing the need for safety, for example, when using cutters to make items out of play dough. They use scissors and other tools with accuracy and skill.

72. The availability of a wide range of well organised equipment and apparatus enables children to achieve very well in their physical development. When using all equipment staff encourage the children to work safely and use equipment such as scissors correctly.
73. Children with special educational needs associated with mobility and sight are successfully encouraged to join in as much physical activity as is possible. Such children show great delight and enthusiasm as, for example, when they throw and catch a ball whilst sitting in a wheelchair.
74. As in other areas of learning, staff use assessment information very well to help move children on in their learning. Observations are undertaken on a regular basis and analysed so that staff are clear where further improvements should be targeted.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- A rich environment is created to stimulate children's responses across the curriculum.
- Very good opportunities are provided for children to be creative. Staff encourage spontaneity in children's learning and make the most of unexpected situations.
- Staff work very well as a team.

### **Commentary**

75. Children of all backgrounds and abilities achieve very well and are on course to meet the expected outcomes. Relationships throughout the nursery are very good and staff work very well as a team. They use each other's expertise well to provide a wide range of creative opportunities to ensure that children get quality experiences that extend their imagination and enhance their skills. Children work effectively in both two and three dimensions.
76. Children are very creative in model making and spend long periods of time perfecting their models, as was seen when a small group created a model village with many high towers and an area where the tipper truck could drop off unwanted old cars. Models that children created as a result of seeing a large car transporter outside the nursery were particularly creative. They showed how well staff had captured children's imagination and made the most of an unexpected situation.
77. Staff encourage children to use a wide range of techniques and media to increase their confidence and skills and develop their imaginative responses. Very good use is made of opportunities to reinforce and extend children's appreciation of pattern and colour, for instance, when they created patterns like those seen on a tiger or a leopard and when mixing colours to paint animals of their choice. A variety of collage work is undertaken and materials are easily to hand so that children can make their own choices about the textures and colours that best suit their purpose.
78. Observational drawings are also encouraged and those of the daffodil bulbs that the children had grown showed a lot of care and attention to detail. Very interesting stimuli are used well to ensure that children develop their skills to their full potential. Opportunities for children to

develop their imagination in role play are well thought out and ensure that they do this well. Many children were seen in the role-play areas re-enacting activities they see at home, for example, ironing, making meals and phoning up to call for a taxi.

79. Children learn by heart a good repertoire of songs that they sing with enthusiasm. They accompany their singing with un-tuned percussion instruments very well. They also have very good opportunities to make their own music using a wide variety of instruments and to interpret music through their movements. The whole nursery session where children sing and play together, for example, playing long and short notes, is particularly effective. Children show a keen sense of enjoyment in their music making and also in being part of the whole nursery group.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

