

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RAWMARSH CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

Rotherham, South Yorkshire

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106827

Headteacher: Mrs J Shelley

Lead inspector: Mr Michael Hewlett

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 257276

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	2 – 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	137
School address:	Barbers Crescent Rawmarsh Rotherham
Postcode:	S62 6AD
Telephone number:	01709 336868
Fax number:	01709 336869
Appropriate authority:	Rotherham LEA
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sarah Roebuck
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Rawmarsh is large Children's Centre offering a wide range of services for young children and their families. It is situated in Rawmarsh, Rotherham, which is an area of social deprivation and high unemployment. There are 137 children on roll altogether, aged between 2 and 4-years-old and there is a variety of attendance patterns, with a large majority attending full-time some full days and a smaller number, 57, attending part-time. Some of the children, especially the younger ones, are referred to the centre because they have additional needs. A high number, 10, have statements of special educational needs (SEN) and another 14 are identified as requiring additional support. Of those children with SEN, the majority have autism whilst the remainder represent the full range of additional needs, including physical as well as social and emotional difficulties. Many of these are placed in a specialist SEN resource which is integrated into the centre. Nearly all the children, 95 per cent, are of white British heritage, with a small proportion coming from mixed race and Chinese backgrounds. The centre has undergone major changes in recent years, including additional buildings and sharing its work with 'Sure Start' colleagues who are based with them. It is open all year round providing extended care and outreach support for families as well as working with other early years' settings throughout Rotherham, offering training and advice. The centre's Beacon Status was renewed in 2002, it was designated a Children's Centre in 2003 and, in the same year, received a School Achievement Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1569	Michael Hewlett	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
11084	Jane Hughes	Lay inspector	
12394	Carole May	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

CfBT incorporating Primary Associates  
Suite 13 West Lancs Technology Management Centre  
Moss Lane View  
Skelmersdale  
Lancashire  
WN8 9TN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>3</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>5</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>19</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective centre with some outstanding features** where children achieve very well. They make such good progress during their time at Rawmarsh because the teaching is very good and staff cater exceptionally well for children's individual needs. Standards of care are of the highest order, leadership is excellent and the centre is very well managed.

The centre's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve very well because of the very good and occasionally excellent teaching;
- Leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is excellent and management is very good;
- Outreach support, the sharing of good practice and the range of extended services offered by the centre are outstanding features;
- Support, guidance and care for children are excellent as is the provision for children with SEN;
- Children behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning because provision for their personal development is very good;
- Partnership with parents is very good;
- There are no significant weaknesses that have not already been identified in the centre's development plan.

The centre has successfully tackled the key issues identified when it was last inspected in 1998. The resource room has been replaced during the recent building improvements and accommodation is much better. Teachers with responsibility are very effective in their monitoring of different areas of learning and this has had a direct impact on the children's achievement. Overall, good improvement has been made.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Children achieve very well.** They are on course to meet the goals they are expected to reach at the end of reception year, except in their speaking skills where standards are lower. Overall, this represents very good progress. Children are exceptionally well taught, their individual needs are picked up early and planned for. As a result, their achievement is very good. This applies to the many different groups within the centre, such as those with SEN and those who are higher attainers.

**Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** There is an excellent ethos within the centre which is apparent in the very good behaviour and keenness to learn that children show. They get on very well with one another. Attendance levels are satisfactory and the majority of children arrive on time. The centre promotes the development of children's social and moral development very well but could do more to make them aware of other cultures in society.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of the education provided by the centre is very good.** This comes as a result of the very good teaching that children receive. Staff have excellent subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how young children learn. **Teaching is of a consistently high standard** across the areas of learning and staff provide a curriculum that excites the children, keeping them interested and actively involved. Opportunities for learning outside are limited by the inadequacies in the outdoor facilities. The provision for children who have SEN is excellent.

Partnership with parents and other agencies is very effective. The centre offers an outstanding range of extended services. This has a direct impact on the provision because parents are provided with a wealth of information and are encouraged to become actively involved in their children's education. Care for children is excellent. Children feel secure and safe and they are happy to come to school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership of the headteacher and her senior colleagues is outstanding.** They provide a clear vision and direction for the centre with children's needs at the very heart of it. **Management is very good** and strong monitoring systems ensure that the centre has a very good understanding of how well it is doing and how it can continue to improve. There is a rigour about checking procedures that helps to sustain the high standards of education and care. There is no room for complacency anywhere at Rawmarsh. Governance is satisfactory. The new governor team only started at the beginning of the school year and it is too soon for them to have had a major impact. Nevertheless, they are already actively involved in helping to improve the centre. They organise their work well and fulfil all their legal responsibilities.

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

Parents and children see the centre in a highly positive light. Parents value the comprehensive range of information they receive, like its friendly atmosphere and are impressed by the excellent leadership. All these views are fully justified.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In the context of a very effective centre with some outstanding features, the most important steps Rawmarsh should take to improve are:

- Deliver the priorities already set out in the school plan in relation to improving children's speaking skills, developing the outdoor area and providing more opportunities to experience the multicultural nature of society.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Children achieve very well throughout the centre. Most are well on course to reach the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage, except in their speaking skills.

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

- Children achieve very well in all the areas of learning;
- Children's individual needs are identified early and very well catered for;
- SEN children make very good progress.

#### **Commentary**

1. When they start in nursery, most children have skills that are well below those usually found in children of the same age. During their time in the centre they move rapidly along the 'stepping-stones' towards the standards they should reach by the end of their reception year, when they complete the Foundation Stage. Most are on course to meet the expected standard. This demonstrates the very good progress that they make. Standards are satisfactory overall, but children's achievement is very good. This is because the centre has outstanding leadership, children are very well taught and the needs of individuals are identified and very well met.
2. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Staff place a great deal of emphasis on improving skills in this area and, as a result, children achieve very well and establish good relationships. Behaviour throughout the nursery is very good. Children are confident and have very positive attitudes to their work.
3. Children make very good progress overall, in their literacy development. They achieve particularly well in making themselves understood to others, such as during imaginative play. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories and some higher attainers are beginning to use writing as a means of communicating, such as writing their names as they register for the session. Despite the high priority and expert support given to improving children's speaking skills, standards are below average by the time they leave. This is because most of the SEN identified within the nursery, centres on delayed communication skills. As a result, progress for these children tends to be in smaller steps, a fact recognised by the centre's planning and assessment procedures.
4. Children's progress in developing their mathematical skills is very good. Children are very successful at making links and applying their knowledge and understanding of numbers in other areas of learning. Counting skills are regularly practised using counting games and rhymes. Their grasp of shape, space and measure is good, particularly evident when they are asked to make models or build 'accommodation' using large wooden blocks.
5. A similarly very good rate of progress is made in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They achieve very well with particular successes seen in the way they confidently use information and communication technology (ICT). This is because staff give them the chance to try out new programs and then practise what they have learned.
6. In physical development, children show good control and are enthusiastic about the tasks they are set. When they get the chance, they make good use of the facilities outdoors. These are limited at present and will benefit from the planned improvements.



7. Children achieve very well and make very good progress in creative development. They sing enthusiastically and most can link actions to the words of songs. Children handle different media confidently and are given plenty of opportunities to practise the skills they are taught.
8. An outstanding feature of the centre's success is the way in which all groups of children achieve very well. Because of the skilled teaching and expert support, everyone makes good gains in their learning. The needs of the high number of children who have SEN are picked up early and, because staff know their individual needs so well, they are given suitable tasks and targets to work towards.
9. Higher attainers are also well catered for. Staff make sure that work is carefully planned at just the right level so that these children are continually challenged. Enrichment and extension activities are set up especially for them and so there is no chance for anyone to become bored or to mark time.
10. This centre has an outstanding commitment to including everyone, making sure all their needs are met. Outcomes show they are successful in this challenging aim as boys and girls make similar rates of progress and there are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by children from different backgrounds.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children's attitudes, behaviour and values are very good. The centre ensures children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good overall. Aspects of children's multicultural awareness are not developed as well as they might be. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory for children of this age.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are really happy at school;
- High staff expectations create a very effective learning environment;
- Parents appreciate how staff encourage all children to play an active part in school life;
- Children and parents see the centre as a secure and welcoming place;
- Staff encourage children to become increasingly independent, whatever their individual needs;
- Provision for children's multicultural development is not as rooted in their daily school experiences as other aspects of their personal development.

### **Commentary**

11. Children burst with enthusiasm as they stream into their classrooms and immediately immerse themselves in the day's play. They are quick to settle and very willing to persevere with their activities. Many leave one area only to return and add to the work they have already completed. Children respond very positively to the consistent endeavours of staff to organise meaningful and absorbing activities. Adults are very skilled at getting the best out of them. In one lesson, for instance, a nursery nurse wanted children to use the glue spreaders differently to create a new textured effect. She carefully modelled what she wanted them to do and some managed to copy her well. Others were less confident and merely continued to spread the coloured glue around with the spreader, flat on the paper. The adult took care to praise everyone for their efforts but made a point of showing how the more successful 'drip paint' pictures had been made. One little girl went away from the table but returned a few minutes later, put her apron back on and created a very effective 'textured' picture. She left for the second time with a beaming smile.

12. The centre is a happy and orderly place. Everyone is familiar with the very high expectations of staff and these are accepted as completely normal. Staff ensure that children behave in an appropriate manner at all times; children know the difference between lunchtime and classroom activities, for example. Adults spend time coaxing children to approach a task in a certain way and most children, even those with significant SEN, blend seamlessly into the purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms. The many children who do have specific needs soon adjust to the demands of the staff and flourish under their sensitive guidance. Communication booklets provide some children with a clear method of interaction with the staff and they blossom as their self-confidence increases.
13. Parents speak freely about how welcome staff make them and their children feel. All the users of the centre are confident that their presence is welcome and that adults working there will do their best to help them with any problems they encounter. As a result, children make the most of the time they spend there, confident in the support they receive. Similarly, adults attending courses make the most of them as they know the staff have got the emphasis just right to meet their individual needs. This assurance brings them hope and sets them on a successful path for the future.
14. No matter what level of SEN a child has, adults in the centre work patiently to instill a 'can do' attitude in all the children. The headteacher and staff are tireless in their efforts to encourage children to value independence and steer them all to make daily decisions about how they spend their time in school. Children learn to work in association with others and understand that their actions have an impact on others. For instance, children seen using ribbon wands and dancing in time to Chinese music were aware of their peers as they moved about and were careful not to hit each other in their excitement. Children have a clear understanding of appropriate social behaviour as, for example, they sit well at the lunch table, eating and chatting politely. Many show a sensitive response to their peers who are sometimes upset when staff stop them from doing something. A child will think nothing of putting an arm on someone's shoulder and asking 'What's the matter?' while others walk around hand in hand, totally at ease with their school friends. Such familiarity stems from the welcoming atmosphere created by staff and shows just how relaxed children are here.
15. Although children have opportunities to learn more about other cultural festivals, such as Chinese New Year, they do not have regular access to a full range of multicultural resources or experiences so that they can begin to understand more about the diversity of modern British society. This is particularly important for these children who live in a largely mono-ethnic community.

## **Exclusions**

There were no exclusions in the last school year.

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

The quality of the education provided is very good. Children receive a wide range of interesting and practical activities that meets their needs. Because lessons are well planned and the school is so well resourced, teaching and learning are very good. Activities move at a brisk pace and no time is wasted. Care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent and the school has managed to achieve a very effective partnership with parents.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good overall, with some excellent teaching;
- Staff plan their lessons very well and make sure children are interested and stimulated;
- Relationships are excellent and staff set children exciting tasks that suit their individual needs;
- Behaviour is very good and this produces an atmosphere that is conducive to learning;
- Very effective assessment procedures are used well to track children's progress.

### Commentary

16. This is a centre where relationships between adults and children are excellent. This makes a major contribution to the quality of teaching which is very good overall. There is more very good and excellent teaching than when the school was last inspected and this, in turn, helps to explain why the different groups of children achieve so well. Detailed planning of work and some outstanding assessment systems mean that adults have a very clear understanding of where children have reached and what they need to do next. The pace of activities is another consistent feature, with little time wasted and teacher input into activities focused and productive. As a result of these common features, staff are able to offer an exciting and stimulating range of activities that support children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.
17. Many of the children arrive in nursery with limited social skills and so a high emphasis is placed on this area. Teaching is very strong and one of its strengths is the way in which all adults are consistent about the way they expect children to behave. They provide them with many chances to build their confidence, and self-esteem. Because they know the children so well, no one is left out when, for example, children play in the house area or are engaged in craft activities. Adults working with them guide the play so that each member of the group becomes fully involved, even those who find difficulty in sharing, taking turns or articulating ideas. This helps everyone feel valued and successful.
18. Staff are very experienced and knowledgeable in teaching language and communication, and put these skills to very good use. There is a systematic approach which carefully builds on children's previous knowledge and understanding and then provides them with small steps to accomplish, linked to the assessments that staff have made. This means that when any of the adults are working with a group, they have a clear picture of the kind of vocabulary that is most appropriate to use. This, in turn, enables children to practise words they know, using them in different situations and building a bank of new words that have been shared with them by the adult support. Children who have SEN, particularly those with very limited communication skills, benefit tremendously from some outstanding teaching that builds on this approach. Staff demonstrate great patience and no little skill as they encourage group members to begin to contribute. Success is built on each one of these small steps, such as children being able to respond with a 'thank you' as they receive a biscuit or choosing which 'cuddly toy' they would like to hold as staff sing nursery rhymes. Assessment systems are equally effective across all the areas of learning.
19. Mathematical development is very well taught and staff are successful at setting up practical opportunities for children to try out their mathematical understanding in other curriculum areas. For example, learning to count the number of drinks their group will need at snack time. Imaginative play is used successfully to reinforce children's understanding of number bonds to ten, vital skills as they share out pieces of fruit following an experiment. Because the staff understand how young children learn, their organisation and contribution to activities, such as these help to root children's mathematical development in lots of interesting and practical experiences. This, in turn, speeds up their rate of progress.

20. Teaching across the other areas of learning is of a similarly very high standard and this helps to explain why children's achievements are so consistent during their time in nursery. Although some of the staff are new to the centre, impressive training and induction programmes ensure all adults know what is expected of them. They set high standards with good levels of challenge in activities that require children to try hard. In addition, they make it clear about the standards of behaviour that are expected and, because this is explained in a positive and constructive way, very good behaviour is a feature of all the activities. Parents commented very favourably on this aspect of the school's provision. They spoke glowingly of the way that all children's needs were being met. In particular, they highlighted how the specific needs of different groups such as younger children, those with SEN and the higher attainers were all recognised by staff and coped with successfully. Despite the challenging behaviour demonstrated by some children, the calm, ordered atmosphere has a big impact on children's learning. It means they can get on with their work unhindered and with confidence. The high praise of the teaching offered by parents is fully deserved.
21. Staff make very good use of the high quality accommodation and resources to support their teaching and help children learn. The new furniture and a refurbished building have been carefully planned and ordered so that they have maximum impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Good examples of this were seen when, for example, a group of higher attainers was able to share a story in the comfortable story area with their teacher whilst a younger, less mature group was still able to engage in a practical activity nearby. The layout of the furniture made sure both groups operated successfully. Staff make the best use they can of the outdoor area to extend curriculum opportunities. It is a large area, ripe for the development set out in the school plan which will allow it to support the teaching still further.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	11	10	3	0	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum provided is very good overall. It meets the needs of all children very well and there are some significant strengths. Resources and accommodation are of high quality.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for children with SEN is excellent;
- Leadership and management of the curriculum are very good;
- There is an able and knowledgeable staff who share their expertise to plan and provide a rich and stimulating environment within the nursery;
- The outside area is in need of improvement and the school has plans to address this;
- There is very good provision to foster personal, social and health education (PSHE), but provision of opportunities to experience other cultures is less successful.

**Commentary**

22. The curriculum fully meets the needs of individual children and all achieve very well. Provision for those with SEN is excellent. Each child is given the help, support and resources he or she needs from very knowledgeable adults who know and understand how

young children learn best. As a result, every child makes very good progress in all areas of learning.

23. The curriculum is organised, led and managed very effectively. All members of staff and students are involved in planning, providing, teaching and supporting the children in a very wide range of interesting and exciting activities designed to help children progress towards the national Early Learning Goals.
24. Children are given plenty of opportunities to make their own choices about which tasks to take part in. This means that throughout the day every child is actively engaged in learning through the many interesting activities provided. They are very well motivated by these activities and helped to participate by the adults teaching them. However, whilst the activities provided inside the classrooms are rich, diverse and stimulating, helping children to remain interested and to develop good concentration skills, at present, the garden does not offer the same wealth of learning opportunities. This is because there is no covered area and no all weather play surface, so for much of the year the ground is very muddy and the resources provided are unappealing when wet. Staff are aware of these limitations and detailed plans are afoot to address the problems. Nevertheless, some very worthwhile activities do take place outside throughout the year. For example, both children and grownups found the beauty and wonder of a frosty morning equally magical. Photographs were taken to capture the experience and turned into a book so that the experience could be recalled time and time again.
25. The spiritual aspect of the children's development is nurtured on a daily basis, for example, through the wonder of nature, the seasons, fascination with the beauty of seashells, the effect of sunshine on shiny paper and the 'magic' of magnets. The provision for promoting moral and social development is also very good. Children are constantly encouraged to take turns and share, to help tidy up and to take care of things. They learn to take care of their personal hygiene and about healthy eating habits. Children have plenty of opportunities to sing nursery rhymes and listen to traditional fairy stories, and, on occasions, artists and musicians visit the nursery. Festivals, such as Chinese New Year are re-enacted in school with enthusiasm by the staff and children alike, but these tend to be one off events rather than embracing cultural development as an integral part of the curriculum.

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

There is excellent provision to ensure children's care, welfare, health and safety. The centre offers excellent support, advice and guidance to children and their families. There is good involvement of children in the life of the school through seeking their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All issues concerned with children's welfare are at the top of the centre's agenda;
- Staff are diligent about establishing the best working relationships possible with parents and carers;
- The very well considered induction arrangements enable children to settle without difficulty;
- Pre-school group facilities for young children with identified needs give very effective preparation for school;
- First-class monitoring of what children can do enables the school to offer the best possible guidance;
- Adults ask children their views about different aspects of school life and record the results.

## Commentary

26. The very best standards of care characterise every aspect of the centre's work. Children's welfare is paramount and the headteacher works tirelessly to ensure that all the pastoral care procedures reflect this.
27. Staff pay careful attention to all aspects of child protection, to the extent that all adults receive very effective training. The designated adult for child protection shares the workload with the headteacher and together they ensure that each child receives all the required support. The needs of children in public care are equally well met and the headteacher ensures that strong relationships are formed with carers so that children receive the best possible support. Impressive written documentation translates into the very highest standards of care as staff implement health and care plans as well as individual education plans. Care routines are rigorously applied and children benefit from these well-entrenched procedures.
28. Parents appreciate the detailed induction programme and report that children settle very well at the centre. The headteacher's telling comment 'We want parents to *want* their child to come here' explains why there is much emphasis on the personal tour given to parents rather than just taking a name down over the telephone. Visiting children are made to feel important as they receive their own stationery pack. Flexibility is the key to the success of the induction programme as staff try very hard to meet the needs of each individual child and family. They also have the sensitivity to recognise that many parents are unsure of whether to stay or go, or when to come back for their children during these first traumatic days and would really rather be told what would be best.
29. Staff in the pre-school setting create an inviting atmosphere for younger children. They are able to experience many of the positive aspects of the school before moving through into the main nursery. This experience helps them to mature more quickly and to become used to the environment and extended social contact, so that they integrate more easily.
30. The centre identifies correctly that children's personal and emotional well being must be a very high priority for staff. Perceptive, well trained adults quickly pick up on any areas of concern and parents are immediately involved in any early intervention strategies formulated to help their children.
31. High quality assessment documentation is gathered throughout the year and this helps staff to have a crystal clear picture of each child's achievements and to correctly target the next steps they need to take to make progress. Detailed records are amassed by the time children are ready to leave the school. Staff go to considerable lengths to use bespoke computerised records to illustrate, with great clarity, children's progress through the different stages of the Early Learning Goals.
32. From time-to-time, when a suitable activity arises, the school gathers children's views. Group bar charts are produced to show exactly what children think about an activity they have completed, for example, and these are displayed for everyone to see. This helps the staff to monitor what children think about some of the things they encounter at school.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very good links with parents and with other schools. Excellent extended services and educational and support programmes are in place. The school establishes good links with the community.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The exceptionally well conceived and delivered extended services;
- Local Early Years' settings benefit from the superior quality of the outreach programme implemented by the centre and delivered by the outreach teacher;
- Parents express many positive views on most aspects of the centre's work;
- A few parents would welcome more information about the curriculum and the progress their children make.

## Commentary

33. This is a school that succeeds in providing 'seamless' educational opportunities to families, from the Bumps and Babes group run by the 'Sure Start' funded community midwife, through toddlers, pre-school provision and nursery. This comprehensive provision for all parents is complemented by the work the school offers specifically for the large number of SEN children and their families.
34. Parents are very positive about the centre, how it is led and managed and the quality of the teaching. They prize their child's place there and feel they make good progress, although a small number of parents would like to have more information about the curriculum and how well their children are getting on. The centre is considering whether to move the dates of parents' meetings so that parents get earlier information about their child's progress which would be of more use to them.
35. One group of parents is particularly effusive in its praise of the centre. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are licensed to lead the National Autistic Society's 'Earlybird' programme. They now run regular courses for parents of autistic children under statutory school age. Some parents travel a significant distance to participate. Parents sit enthralled during the seminars because, finally, these two course leaders are painting pictures in front of them that they have already seen. Some parents expressed their relief that they had finally found something practical that had immeasurably improved their relationship with their children. One said 'It was life changing', another 'They've been a lifeline'. One mother said it was impossible to imagine how she felt when her child asked 'Mummy, will you play a game with me?' because she had feared that day would never arrive. The impact of this very specialist work is clear to see around the centre, as the children are totally involved in all the activities.
36. Excellence in action is also evident in the first-class work of the Beacon funded outreach teacher. She sets a superb example to other Early Years' practitioners in her organised, highly focused work schedule. She regularly supports local early years settings and offers many practical suggestions about how the staff in these schools can improve their practice. She has gathered a huge amount of quality information and resources in order to support her work and has established fruitful relationships with many staff. In a one-to-one support session at a local day nursery, she worked with staff on an ongoing audit of their provision. This particular session focused on mathematical provision across the Foundation Stage curriculum. The outreach teacher drew on the strength of her professional relationship with staff as she checked a self-review sheet about current practice. The evaluation highlighted areas to be maintained, improved or changed. Next followed a focused exchange on what was successful and ways to refine what they do. She had a sensitive approach and provided colourful examples that she had either seen or used herself. The session ended with the staff feeling very well supported and with a wealth of new ideas to implement. The outreach teacher shared her knowledge and best practice generously to benefit a whole new audience of children.

37. High quality liaison exists between the centre and several other schools. This ensures that children transfer to full-time education with the minimum of anxiety and encourages professional dialogue on a number of levels. Students come on work placements and bring good ideas with them. A significant factor in the success of this centre is that staff are always open to new ideas and refining their practice to improve provision for the children in their care.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership is excellent and the quality of management is very good. The governance of the centre is satisfactory. The governing body was only established at the beginning of the school year but is already well organised and efficient. It is a credit to everyone that the huge expansion of the centre's services, running alongside a major building programme, has been managed so successfully.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership;
- The centre has a clear understanding of how well it is doing and how it can improve;
- There is a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff;
- Financial management is good;
- The school plan is very effective but now needs a longer timescale.

### **Commentary**

38. The governing body was only established at the beginning of the school year but is already beginning to play an active part in school life. It is well organised and efficient with committee structures in place and individual governors given specific roles and responsibilities. Governors are very well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is a good dialogue with the headteacher when discussions take place. They have had few opportunities yet to set the strategic direction of the centre or challenge what goes on but they are aware of what they need to do.
39. The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent and it makes a huge contribution to the success of the centre. Her clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations ensure that all aspects of the centre's work are of high quality. Rawmarsh is a complex organisation and has an extensive range of services on offer but the headteacher does not allow this to compromise in any way the constant striving for excellence at all levels. She is very well supported by her senior colleagues. There is strong collegiate style of leadership with senior colleagues having a shared vision and they are equally successful in delivering their areas of responsibility, such as SEN or outreach support. This clear vision is evident in the very comprehensive School Development Plan, which sets out a very good programme of action to deal with relevant priorities. The impact of these actions are measured to make sure they are working well and the plan is a valuable vehicle for moving the centre forward. It covers the year ahead in great detail but longer-term plans are more sketchy. Now that the centre is re-established and settled in the refurbished and extended building, the headteacher has recognised that the opportunity is there to plan further ahead.
40. Management of the centre is very good. A particular strength is the way that the headteacher and senior managers have established highly effective systems to check up on the work of the centre. They make very good use of the data they collect, starting with a picture of what skills children bring to nursery with them. They analyse individual children's progress in the different areas of learning and observe staff teach. As a result of these well established and rigorous systems, the centre gathers a clear picture of what is going well and how it needs to improve. All the evidence points to an accurate and honest evaluation of its own performance and a commitment to improve still further. For example, analysis of the data



and observations of children suggest that children's speaking skills are still underdeveloped and changes have been made to the planned activities so that this can be put right.

41. A really impressive feature of the centre's work is the way it enables children to achieve their potential. This is particularly true of the excellent provision for children who have SEN. No stone is left unturned as the headteacher and her colleagues search for ways in which they can support, encourage and challenge a large group of children who present a wide range of complex needs. They make very good use of external agencies and experts to draw up suitable strategies and, just as important, access and deliver courses that will help them to improve their practice still further. The professional development of all staff is given a very high priority and results in a well qualified and confident group of staff who are very well equipped to meet all the demands that meet them.
42. Parents' views of the school leadership are very positive. At their meeting and in the returned questionnaires, there was a unanimous view that the centre was well led and managed. Their views are confirmed by inspectors who found leadership to be excellent.
43. The finances of the centre are managed very efficiently. It is yet to receive a delegated budget and still works closely with the local authority. Funds are carefully accounted for and reports indicate the systems are secure. Very good use is made of ICT to support the work of the school; for example, providing interesting newsletters for parents as well as measuring how successful individual children and different groups have been by checking on the progress they have made.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	445161
Total expenditure	430691
Expenditure per pupil	4394

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8440
Balance carried forward to the next	14470

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

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

**Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.** Many of the children had only started nursery at the beginning of this school year but they settle very well because staff quickly introduce routines that ensure children feel secure and confident. All children achieve very well because much of the teaching is very good and staff provide an outstanding range of interesting activities that is matched to individual needs and abilities.

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

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

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

- The children settle in very quickly and know the routines well;
- Children of all abilities behave very well and have good attitudes to learning. They achieve very well and make rapid progress;
- Teaching is very good overall;
- Greater attention is needed to helping children become aware that there are cultures and beliefs different from their own.

#### **Commentary**

44. The very good processes for settling children into school ensures that they part happily from the adults who brings them and quickly learn the nursery routines. The adults are encouraged to stay for a little while at the start of each nursery session and play with their child in one of the many exciting activities provided. This helps the children to gain the confidence to choose what they want to do. Parents encourage their children to select their own name card and 'write' their names on a piece of paper to indicate that they are present. Children quickly learn to select what they need because all the resources needed for a task are easily accessible. They behave very well and have good attitudes to learning because the teaching they receive is very good. As a result, children achieve very well and most of them are on line to reach the expected standard by the end of their year in reception.
45. All members of staff work together to ensure that the children quickly learn the correct way to behave. They encourage children to play together well and share toys and equipment. All children, including those with SEN, are encouraged to join in and try new things because the adults often work with them at a task. This helps the children to concentrate and to persevere. When children find things difficult an adult is on hand to help them succeed. The adults promote an 'I can' attitude because they are aware that success helps build children's confidence and self-esteem. They know that these attributes are vital to future success and social skills. Children are constantly given praise and reassurance to build up each child's sense of self-worth. All adults encourage the development of social skills in a variety of ways. Children are constantly encouraged to take turns and share. A great deal of attention is paid to developing co-operation with one another. This is given great importance especially for those children with SEN who receive excellent support both on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. All adults act as good role models in co-operation and working as a team. During the inspection, children were encouraged to work together to make a Chinese dragon that was used in celebrating Chinese New Year. This was a delightful time, thoroughly enjoyed by all children.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well;
- Teaching and learning are very good;
- They are developing a great love of books and understand how to use them;
- There is a good balance between teacher led and pupil chosen activities;
- Many opportunities are planned and provided for the children to speak and listen but their speaking skills remain below average.

### Commentary

46. The majority of children achieve very well. They are on course to reach the expected learning targets by the end of the reception year in listening, reading and writing. This represents very good progress as many of the children arrive in the centre with limited skills in language and communication. Although staff work very hard and are successful in improving oracy skills, many children are not on course to reach the expected standard in the Early Learning Goals. There are a number of reasons why children do so well. Teaching is very good and there is a significant proportion of excellent teaching. Staff's detailed planning and knowledge of what each child needs, through extensive tracking systems, means that work is set at just the right level. This applies to children of all ability groups. Those who have complex SEN are very well taught, often working individually with a support teacher or assistant. This enables them to experience the full curriculum in this area and practise and consolidate the skills they have learned. For many of the children who have statements of SEN, their language acquisition and levels of understanding are coming on very slowly. Nevertheless, their achievements are very good due to the constant encouragement and skilled support they receive. As a result, the different groups of children, including those who have SEN and those who are higher attainers, are targeted to receive just the right level of support and challenge to ensure they progress well.
47. Many of the children enter the centre with very poor speech. Although standards are improving, and despite the best efforts of staff, standards are still below average. Very good use is made of support services, such as speech therapy to intervene and offer specialist input where the needs are particularly acute. In addition, opportunities for children to speak out loud and contribute to discussions are built into activities across the different areas of learning.
48. Children's listening skills are very well promoted through the planned group activities, such as story time or when they share news. During story time children listen attentively and are keen to answer questions about what they have just heard. The teacher creates a really exciting atmosphere and a real feature of the work in this area is the way adults become actively involved in children's imaginative play. At its best, adult input guides and supports what children are doing, increasing their confidence in using language in different ways. For example, thoughtful adult support of a group playing in the home corner enriched the quality of their speech because the adult only intervened where necessary, encouraging the children to try to find just the right word to describe what their imaginary family might be saying.
49. A real feature of the nursery is the way in which all the groups of children demonstrate a love of books. In the comfortable library areas as well as other nooks and crannies, groups of all ability levels are to be found engrossed in books. As a result, they handle books carefully, understand the concept that print and pictures convey a meaning and are keen to show what they know about stories they have heard.

50. Children's writing skills are promoted well throughout the school day, starting with a registration sheet where they are expected to sign in as they arrive. A very good range of resources, such as pens, felt-tips, paints and pencils are available for children to explore and develop their early writing skills. Most children are confident in making marks to which they give meaning, routinely 'writing' their names on pictures as they complete them.
51. Many have autism and, for some of them, their ability to communicate with classmates and staff is very limited. Because of some outstanding teaching by staff who are skilled in meeting the needs of these children, their skills are improving, albeit slowly. Small steps, constant encouragement and well practised routine, all contribute to successful lessons where adults provide just the right levels of support so that children are confident and keen to improve. Other groups' needs are similarly well met, such as an identified group of higher attainers who are given extension activities and harder tasks so that they are kept interested and challenged.
52. Children's progress in communication, language and literature is systematically recorded. Excellent records are kept describing what each child can do and this information is used to help children maintain and improve their progress.
53. This area of learning is well organised. The co-ordinator makes sure lessons are carefully planned and suitable resources are available for the children to practise their skills. She monitors the work in the two nursery classes, including observing the teaching, to ensure there is a consistency of approach in what staff do. The impact of these monitoring arrangements is evident in the way all children throughout the centre experience such a rich curriculum and have equal access regardless of which group they find themselves in.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well;
- Staff make very good use of practical situations to make number work interesting and relevant;
- Children's individual needs are very well met.

### **Commentary**

54. Children achieve very well and make very good progress in their mathematical development. As a result, most are on course to reach the expected goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. Staff provide numerous practical activities to improve their understanding of numbers and consolidate their counting skills. Many children can count to 10 without adults helping them and higher attainers make good attempts at counting to even bigger numbers; for example, as they try to work out how many of their classmates have had their snack or how many blocks they need to complete their building. A key feature of the most successful mathematical activities is seen when children apply what they know in practical situations. This was well illustrated outside where children were confident in counting how many bean bags they had managed to throw into buckets and how many laps they completed on their bikes. All the group members were able to join in and some higher attainers were asked more difficult questions which made them think harder as they worked out simple take away sums, such as deciding how many more bean bags would be needed in the bucket if they were going to get a total of 10. Standards are higher than those found when the school was last inspected. This is because work is more closely matched to children's needs and higher attainers are given work which is more challenging for them.
55. Evidence from discussions with children and looking at the activities they were undertaking indicated that most children have a fast developing understanding of shape, space and

measures. For example, they successfully complete some quite complicated jigsaws which require them to recognise the correct shapes and patterns. Their abilities to express themselves mathematically is less apparent and is linked to the general speech and language delays that many of them experience. This is despite the best efforts of all staff who focus their interventions on improving children's language skills, modelling words and phrases and encouraging them to practise what they have heard.

56. Most of the teaching is very good. Activities are exciting and stimulating and resources are carefully chosen with just the right balance between adult led and child-initiated work. A feature of the best teaching in this area is the way in which adults make sure that opportunities to improve mathematical skills are set at just the right level and grab children's interest. This enables children of all abilities and needs to work together on an activity, as for example, they construct a track for their trains. Higher attainers managed to complete a complex shape, which incorporated different shapes and turning circles, whilst another group member, who had additional needs and was supported by an adult, joined two pieces of track. This was an enormous achievement for him and this positive outcome was rightly celebrated by the rest of his classmates.
57. This area of learning is very well led. Achievement of individuals is checked and action is taken when progress is not fast enough; for example, increasing the level of focus and adult support for children where this proves to be necessary. Staff provide children with a very good range of resources and these support their learning well. For example, computer software is carefully selected so that children can consolidate what they have learned and links to the topics being explored such as drawing shapes and matching figures.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are very confident using computers;
- Very good teaching helps children to achieve so well;
- There is a rich curriculum with activities that are interesting and stimulating;
- Very good links are made with other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

58. Achievement is very good. Children are on course to reach the standards expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents very good progress. Achievement and progress are particularly good in ICT. This is because the teaching is very good, staff are confident and they make best use of the resources and the equipment provided.
59. Teaching in this area is very good because activities are well organised and exciting, carefully planned and challenge children to try activities that, at first, they might find difficult. As a result, standards are improving fast. All adults provide children with every opportunity to talk about and discuss their ideas. They provide interesting resources and use these well to support the learning. For example, a collection of different fruits grabbed their interest and motivated them to observe carefully when they were looking at the similarities and differences in their size, shape, texture and taste. The adult working with them skilfully made links with other areas of learning as she encouraged the children to divide an apple into small portions, calculating how many more pieces would be needed to make sure the whole group had a slice to eat.
60. Children's learning about time, place, cultures and beliefs is successfully promoted through themes that are planned for both nursery classes as well as the pre school groups. Adults offer very good support as they help children to make connections between their existing

knowledge and the wider world, talking about current events in children's own lives and comparing this with other children around the world. Their knowledge of their own and other cultures is increased as they celebrate festivals, such as Eid and the Chinese New Year. A visit from a parent who taught the children Chinese dance brought the session to life, making it relevant and immediate. This helps them to learn about the similarities and differences in people's lives and how they prepare for these events. Staff recognise that more work is needed to embed children's understanding of other cultures into the wider curriculum and this development is highlighted in the school plan. Children have a good understanding of events in their own lives. They talk confidently about how they have changed and are much more 'grown up' than their baby brother or sister.

61. Children are very successful in improving their skills in using ICT. The children make very good independent use of the computer and have well established skills in moving objects around the screen. Staff select from a very good range of software and equipment which children really enjoy using. A good example of this was seen in the way that programmable toys featured so regularly in classroom work. This enables children who are higher attainers and those with SEN to join in with the same activity, at different levels, succeeding, collaborating and feeling very much part of the larger group.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is generally very good;
- Children have very good opportunities to develop fine muscle control;
- The outdoor area is inadequate.

### **Commentary**

62. Staff are providing a wide range of interesting activities every day to help children develop both fine and large movements. Fine muscle control is being developed well through routine use of chalks, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue, paint, small toys and construction kits. Inside the nursery, space is limited and there is little room for children to develop their large muscle movements. Nevertheless, during the inspection, good opportunities were provided for children to dance to music.
63. Staff also encourage children to run, jump, climb, throw and catch when using a variety of apparatus and resources in the garden and most children demonstrate the level of skill expected for their age. When using wheeled toys most children show good co-ordination skills and awareness of space. However, during the inspection, the garden was very wet and muddy. This made some activities hazardous and the staff, quite rightly, curtailed the space and resources that children were allowed to use. This limited children's opportunities to improve their skills in this area.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's imagination and creativity are developed very well through a variety of interesting and exciting activities that the children find irresistible;
- Skills are taught very well when children are working directly with an adult;
- Plenty of opportunities are provided for children to practise the skills that they are taught during their play and as a result, they achieve very well.

### Commentary

64. Children are taught skills in a wide range of art activities and are given sufficient time to revisit them and practise on their own. A wide variety of interesting and exciting activities and experiences are readily available to the children, many of which they find irresistible. Very good opportunities are provided to experiment with making models from junk, cutting, sticking and experimenting with a variety of materials and tools.
65. Good opportunities are also provided for children to develop an interest in music. Children are able to listen to music throughout the day and are encouraged to talk about what they hear. During the inspection, Chinese music was playing as the children carried out their tasks. Percussion instruments are provided regularly and the instruments displayed so children can experiment with them at choosing time. During the inspection, seeing a group experimenting with the instruments, a nursery nurse sat with them helping them to shake and bang instruments in time to nursery rhymes. This activity kept the children engaged for a considerable amount of time and stimulated an interest in making some of their own. They found playing the shakers and 'stringed instruments' they made fascinating. The adults encouraged them to listen to the different sounds they made and use appropriate words to describe what they heard. Children were very proud of the finished products and carried them carefully as they showed them to all the adults present.
66. Each room in the nursery is very well equipped with role play areas and there are opportunities to make houses and dens in the nursery garden. Dressing up clothes are provided to fire children's imagination. The adults sometimes join in the children's games to help them co-operate with one another and to move children's learning forward. Children with SEN are given additional adult support to help them take part in the same activities as the rest of the children. As a result of very good provision, children of all abilities achieve very well, make very good progress and most are on line to reach the standards expected at the end of their reception year.

## 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	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	8
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<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	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
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).*