

INSPECTION REPORT

ROWLEY VIEW NURSERY SCHOOL

Wednesbury, West Midlands

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104136

Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Dutton

Lead inspector: Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th March 2004

Inspection number: 257366

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	2 – 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	38
School address:	149 Dangerfield Lane Wednesbury West Midlands
Postcode:	WS10 7RU
Telephone number:	0121 568 8168
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jill Downen
Date of previous inspection:	10 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Rowley View Nursery School is located in Darlaston, Wednesbury and draws its children from the locality, which is in an area of significant socio-economic deprivation. Currently, there are 90 children on roll (48 boys and 42 girls) and they attend part-time each day either in the morning or afternoon; 19 of these children are full time, benefiting from wrap around care. Fourteen of the children are under three years of age. The school also offers 12 breakfast club places and has 48 available playgroup places in another building. The children's levels of achievement on entry to school are low. Although there is a wide spread of ability there are very few high attainers and a significant proportion score zero on profile on starting school; mathematical development is especially weak. Nine of the children have special educational needs. Six children are at an early stage of learning English and their home languages are Panjabi, Gujarati and Urdu. The school received an achievement award in 2003. It is involved in several projects including SureStart, Wrap Around Care, a Holiday Play Scheme and the Effective Early Learning (EEL) project for which it has received a distinction. Since the previous inspection almost all of the staff have changed and the school has moved to a new building.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	English as an additional language; Foundation Stage; Community provision.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This very good school provides education of high quality for the children. The children achieve very well in most areas of learning. Leadership and management are very effective in promoting teaching and learning of very good quality. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The children make rapid progress in all of the areas of learning and mostly achieve very well
- Leadership promotes a strong sense of drive and purpose, creating a highly effective team
- Children's academic and personal needs are met very skilfully
- More could be done to extend the children's language
- The curriculum is stimulating, challenging and highly inclusive
- The care and well being of children lie at the heart of all the school does
- The school very effectively involves parents

The school has improved very well since it was last inspected in 1998. The issues raised have been tackled rigorously and much has been done to build upon its good reputation. Improved planning, teaching, learning and leadership and management have all contributed to raising the quality of education provided and the achievement of all groups of children. The governors now have a clear and strategic view of the school, and the development plan is well focused. Assessment has been strengthened and successfully guides staff when planning work. The staff are ambitious for the children and are well placed to build upon the school's many strengths.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Inspection evidence shows that the **children achieve very well** in most of the areas of learning and make very good progress. In 2003, the school received a national award for achievement. When they start school, most children have levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are very low when compared with the average three-year-old and are especially weak in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The school's primary focus is on personal, social and emotional development and it is highly successful in helping children to gain secure skills in this area of learning, which equips them well for all aspects of work in the nursery. By the time they leave the school, most children are working at an appropriate level for their age in most areas of learning and this represents very good success for the school. Although the children achieve well in communication, language and literacy and make good progress, standards are below those expected at this stage of their development. The weakness is in the children's skills in expressing themselves clearly using a broad range of vocabulary. In mathematical, creative and physical development the children are at an appropriate stage of their development having made significant progress in a short time. A particular success is the children's attainment in music. Although almost all start school with very limited experiences, they quickly grasp basic skills in knowledge and understanding of the world, and make good progress but, because of language difficulties, are working at the level which is a little below that expected for their age in some aspects of this area of learning.

Children of different backgrounds and abilities are largely successful. Children at an early stage of learning English make very good progress and participate fully in all of the school's activities, benefiting from well focused individual support. Children with special educational needs achieve very well because the staff are highly skilful in pinpointing what needs to be done to move learning on. The staff make very good use of individual education plans and resources to support the children's understanding. Boys and girls are equally successful and the staff think carefully about planning tasks which motivate both groups.

The children rush into school with eager anticipation. They have very positive attitudes and behave very well, and quickly become absorbed in tasks. The staff meet the children's needs very well and **promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively**. The children are prepared very well for their next schools. Among the children's most significant successes are their ability to concentrate and to work cooperatively. Staff prepare the children very well for life in a culturally diverse society. Although attendance is not statutory the staff work successfully to encourage the parents to bring their children to school. Attendance is rather low.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Very good teaching and learning combined with a rich curriculum enable the school to provide a very good quality of education. There are many strengths in the teaching, underpinned by the excellent relationships between staff and children. The staff expect much from the children and promote learning successfully by gearing their planning to meet the needs of individuals. This means that children with special educational needs and the more able are encouraged to achieve their potential. Children with English as an additional language are also taught very well. Teaching is based upon a thorough use of very good assessment to identify what the children need to learn and skilful monitoring of progress ensures that skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently. The staff are particularly adept at intervening at just the right point to move learning on at a good pace. Most of the teaching, including personal, social and emotional and mathematical development, is very good as learning is brought to life through practical activities, very effective use of resources and much challenge. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good but the staff do not always extend language sufficiently by introducing and using a wide vocabulary and developing the children's responses to questions. The well trained staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and know when to intervene and when to allow the children opportunities to explore and find out on their own. The flexible balance between adult led and child chosen activities helps to promote independence and self confidence. The children quickly grow in confidence, are keen and hard working and take much pride in their work.

The school's curriculum is challenging and relevant to the children, and very good links are made between the areas of learning. Everyone is included very well. The school has very good accommodation and extensive and stimulating resources. The good number of well qualified staff are very committed to school improvement and involved in much good training to enhance their skills. High levels of support and care, often linked with help for the children's families, ensure that the children thrive in a positive environment. The school has very effective systems to support the children's academic, social and personal needs. Extended provision for those in need does much to prepare children well for the next stage of their education. Highly effective support through courses, home visits and high quality information helps to establish excellent links with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. All staff, led by the excellent headteacher, have high aspirations for the children and are always looking for ways to improve. The governance of the school is very good and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The management and administration of the school are very effective and all routines and systems are clearly understood by staff, parents and their children. The headteacher rigorously analyses the school's performance and sets challenging targets for the staff. The school does not have a delegated budget. Grants and other funds are used in the most effective way to support the children's learning. Careful consideration is given to the principles of best value when purchasing supplies and services.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are delighted with the work done by the school and especially the ways in which the staff help their children to achieve very well. Children obviously love coming to school and are eager participants in all aspects of school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to build upon its success:

- Increase the opportunities for the children to extend their language skills

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Attainment on admission to the school is very low and very few children have skills that are normally expected of three-year-olds. Children achieve very well. By the end of their time in the nursery, most children are working at levels which are at least appropriate for their age, except in communication, language and literacy, which is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are especially successful in improving their personal, social and emotional skills, mathematical, creative and physical development
- Children make rapid gains in their learning
- Most children lack confidence in speaking clearly and with expression
- Children with special educational needs make very good progress

Commentary

1. Nearly all of the children start school with very poor skills especially in language, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Very few have the confidence of the average three year old and this aspect of development receives strong attention from the staff. There are several other significant barriers to learning which affect the children's development, including their low socio-economic circumstances which leads to above average levels of absence due to illness. The school compensates very well for these barriers by supporting parents in developing their skills in supporting their children's learning, providing extended opportunities for the children to attend school and through the playgroup provision which prepares the children for school. In spite of these barriers to learning, the children achieve very well in most of the areas of learning because of very good teaching and a rich and challenging curriculum. Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to successfully challenge and inspire the children. The improved teaching has brought about very good progress in most of the areas of learning.
2. The school is particularly successful in promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development and, by the time the children leave the school, most are working at a level appropriate for their age. The children become well motivated and interested learners who have well advanced skills of concentration. They develop good attributes in showing care and consideration for others. The children make good progress in communication, language and literacy and achieve well but, by the end of their time in the nursery, few attain the expected level for their age. Their very limited range of vocabulary and poorly developed speaking skills hamper other aspects of their progress. They show much interest in books and stories, and most know a good range of songs and nursery rhymes. They listen very well but find it difficult to explain what they have learned. Girls are slightly more successful than boys in communication, language and literacy but this variation is not significant. In some instances the children are not given sufficient opportunity to extend their language. Conversely, the school's focus on improving mathematics includes a good emphasis on specific vocabulary.
3. The school's main priority this year is to accelerate the children's progress in mathematical development and the staff are meeting with good success. By the time they leave the nursery, the children are working at levels which are appropriate for their age. They make rapid progress and achievement is very good. The staff combine the work in number with other areas of learning and this works well as the children begin to understand the importance of mathematics in their

everyday lives. Children enjoy counting and are successful to 10, with the more able competent in recognising several numerals. The good links with other areas of learning means that the children develop an appropriate knowledge of shape and measures. Children make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world but, by the end of their time in the nursery, few children are working at the level expected for their age in some aspects of this area of learning. The children's understanding is hampered by a limited range of vocabulary and they struggle to explain what they have learned. However, they attain appropriately in technology, making good models using a variety of materials and construction toys. They show suitable skills in using computers and gain much enjoyment from these activities. Standards in the scientific aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world are generally below average although the children have a secure understanding of living things through their observations and care for the African land snails and guinea pigs. Progress in creative and physical development is very good and the staff provide rich and challenging activities which stimulate learning and enable the children to achieve very well. By the end of their time in the nursery the children are working at an appropriate level for their age. The children are imaginative and expressive in their paintings, drawings and model making activities and use a good range of skills and techniques. They are especially successful in music making and singing.

4. This is a school which meets the needs of individuals very well. The excellent relationships and links with parents ensure a smooth start to school and staff are well aware of specific strengths and weaknesses in the children's development prior to starting school. As a result, the provision for children with special educational needs starts immediately they enter the school and this enables this group to begin to achieve very well. Individual education plans are well crafted and focused and staff use them to check on the children's progress. The staff promote equal opportunities very well and meet the needs of boys and girls by planning a wide variety of activities which appeal to each group. Overall boys and girls achieve equally well although girls are more interested in early reading and writing than the boys. The provision for children at an early stage of learning English is very good and these children make rapid gains in learning English. They participate fully in all the school's activities because the staff plan practical work and use repetition well to reinforce vocabulary. The staff also identify more able children and provide them with additional challenges; this group achieve very well and are working at an appropriate level for their age in all of the areas of learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The children have very positive attitudes to school. They respond very well to the very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school and make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The very high quality of these aspects of the children's development has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children become absorbed in, and often excited by, what they are doing
- There are excellent relationships between the children and the adults who work with them
- All staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour and work consistently and successfully to achieve this
- There are very good opportunities to learn about the lives of people in other countries
- Attendance is unsatisfactory

Commentary

5. Because the school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well the children understand what is expected of them and begin to develop the confidence to explore and experiment. The ice mountain, for example, generated great excitement as the children squirted colours onto the melting ice and covered it with glitter. The sensory room is very effective in promoting children’s awareness of texture and light and how this makes them feel. The children’s developing confidence is also evident in the way the children move from one activity to another, observing the routines of the classroom and sharing the resources with good humour. They help themselves to drinking water and willingly tidy up when asked. Most children wait patiently for their turn, for example on the balancing beam, and several collaborate effectively without adult direction. Two children built a quite substantial wall together using sand and water for cement, showing determination to finish. The “Family” grouping system is very effective in creating small communities within the larger community of the nursery. This makes the children feel secure and develops their self-confidence and independence very well. The parents are very supportive of the values promoted by the school and this is an important element in the children’s on-going personal, social and emotional development.

6. Because the children clearly understand what their teachers expect of them, disputes are rare and behaviour is very good. Those children with special educational needs receive high levels of appropriate support, which enables them to participate fully in all the activities. The children enjoy singing and making music with a wonderful range of African instruments. Exciting displays support the current focus on African life and the children are encouraged to touch and explore the items displayed. Artwork the children have created, for example the batik display, gives them a further insight into African life. The children are very gentle when holding and stroking the guinea pigs, aware that they are living creatures and anxious not to hurt them in any way. The children visit places of interest in the local area, for example a supermarket and the Walsall Art Gallery, and these visits have a very good impact on their social and cultural development. Religious festivals are celebrated and this widens the children’s perspective of the importance and excitement associated with other cultures and beliefs.

7. Despite the school’s very good systems to improve attendance, there has been little improvement since the last inspection. Much of the absence is due to childhood illness, but there is a small minority of parents who do not value the education provided by the school and do not bring their children to school regularly enough.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8%	School data	9.2%

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching and learning are very good and complemented by very effective assessment. The rich and varied curriculum is very well planned and meets the needs of all children. The staff provide excellent levels of support and care. Links with parents are excellent.

Teaching and learning

The children achieve very well because of very good teaching which stimulates a desire in the children to learn. Assessment is very well focused.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff make very good links between the areas of learning
- Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn
- Individual needs, especially for those with learning difficulties, are catered for very well
- More could be done to extend the children's vocabulary and broaden their use of English
- Staff expect much of the children and encourage independence
- The children are avid learners and enthusiastic about the challenges set for them

Commentary

8. The school has improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the teaching and learning. The teaching has many strengths and few areas for development. From starting school, the children are encouraged to become inquisitive and well motivated learners because the staff expect much of them and provide a very stimulating range of activities. Children are welcomed into a bright, attractive and friendly environment which helps them to feel secure and enables them to explore and investigate. This very positive atmosphere, in which the children thrive, is the result of the staff's very good awareness of how young children learn. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good and contributes much to the children's learning and achievement. The children are encouraged to make choices, stick to tasks and to listen. They work hard and show increasingly good concentration. Staff provide high quality experiences and activities which promote the children's confidence and self esteem and which prepare them very well for the next stage in their education. The very good use of praise and celebration of the children's achievements does much to raise the children's self esteem and promote good learning habits.
9. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good. Language development receives high priority and the children are encouraged to listen to stories, learn songs and rhymes and take part in varied and interesting role-play, such as pretending to be customers at the greengrocery shop. Boys and girls play well together and when staff are involved there is good progress in developing vocabulary, although many children struggle to name a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Story telling is a strength and the staff make good use of the good resources available often enhancing the story through the use of puppets. They encourage the children to join in with repeated phrases and promote a good interest in books. Sometimes the children return to their favourite stories such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and retell the story simply in their own words, making use of resources such as the magnet board to order the story in correct sequence. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged but in some situations the adults do not take sufficient lead in helping children to develop and use complex vocabulary and sentences. There are good and relevant opportunities provided for the children to practise early writing; mostly girls participate in these activities.
10. The teaching of mathematical development is very good and this area of learning is the school's current priority. The staff have had good training and support in broadening their approaches to teaching this area of learning. Mathematics is very much part of most activities and the staff seize every opportunity to encourage the children to count, sing number rhymes and learn how to write numbers. The learning centres around practical work such as counting the washing on a line. Staff skilfully teach new mathematical vocabulary encouraging the children to *pair* socks to learn about the value of two. Learning is made fun and the children respond to these practical tasks with enthusiasm, often sticking at tasks for extended periods. There is very good teaching of

knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and this contributes much to the children's achievement. Music is taught especially well and the staff encourage the children to sing and play a wide range of instruments to learn about playing together and keeping time. The staff have high expectations of the children and have established good rules and routines which are clearly understood by the children. In creative development there are very good opportunities for the children to make decisions, and to explore a wide range of materials to create vibrant and imaginative pictures and models. Outdoor play is an integral part of everyday activity and the children respond with much enthusiasm to the imaginative and challenging opportunities on offer. Practical work such as playing with sand and water, opportunities to grow seeds and plants and take care of living things contribute well to the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

11. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and they plan meticulously to ensure that the children benefit from rich experiences. There is a very good balance between opportunities for the children to choose - to learn on their own or to be part of a group and taught new skills by adults. Staff are very good at tracking how well the children make progress and keep detailed records based on thorough observations of the children at work. This information is used very well to plan the next step in learning and to identify children with particular needs. Children with special educational needs are taught very well. They have well crafted individual education plans and the staff working with them are patient focused and have very good expertise and skill in boosting the children's confidence. Similarly, staff have a good knowledge of the needs of children with English as an additional language and provide many practical opportunities for them to learn. There is good intervention and the use of repetition to reinforce new words. More able children are clearly identified and the questions staff ask them are challenging so that the children make very good gains in their learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	20 (60%)	11 (34%)	0	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 curriculum is very good and successfully meets the children's needs. The school is highly inclusive and staff work hard to enrich the opportunities for the children. The well qualified and skilful staff make very good use of the school's high quality resources and accommodation to promote learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for personal, social and health education is of high quality
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good
- Staff support children with English as an additional language very well
- Through very good planning the staff make effective links between the areas of learning

Commentary

12. The school has recently reviewed its curriculum and structure of the school day in order to improve the balance and timing of activities. As a result, there is a very effective balance between child initiated tasks and opportunities which are led and directed by staff. Much guidance is given to the children at the start of the school about making choices and a careful watch is kept so that all experience a good range of activities. The curriculum is well balanced and made very relevant

to the children. Staff are quick to adapt the planning when opportunities for learning arrive as when there was some recent building work and the children learned about building materials and techniques. All of the areas of learning are securely based on national guidelines and initiatives and the staff provide stimulating and challenging opportunities which enhance learning. The staff have improved the curriculum since the previous inspection and planning is sharp and well focused. The recent focus on mathematical development has done much to integrate mathematics into other areas of learning. The main area for development in the curriculum is to extend opportunities for the children to engage in conversation using an extended vocabulary.

13. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and plan their time very well so that they maximise the time spent with the children. The curriculum meets individual needs very well. It helps them to make very good progress and prepares them very well for the next school. The main thrust of the curriculum is to promote the children's personal, social and emotional development and staff are very successful in this. The focus on individual needs is a strength of the provision. Children with special educational needs receive very focused support and benefit from very good teaching and resources. Their individual education plans are very specific and reviewed regularly alongside parents so that all are clear about the next steps in learning. The school provides additional support from its own funds to enhance the provision for special educational needs. Staff have a good awareness of the needs of children with English as an additional language and design activities that engage their interest and provide stimulating opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.
14. The curriculum is enriched through an extensive range of visits. On a recent visit to an art gallery the children found out about different techniques and skills and applied them in their own work. The current theme of African art has enabled the children to appreciate a different cultural tradition and to develop their imaginations and creativity. Visits in the locality, such as to the supermarket, bring the wider world to life, and follow up work in the role play area has contributed much to the children's mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. The school involves parents very well in their children's learning and this helps to broaden the impact of the curriculum outside school. Links with SureStart enhance these opportunities and parents express much appreciation for the way in which the school helps them to understand the curriculum. Extended provision through the breakfast club and opportunities for the children to spend additional time in the nursery contribute much to achievement. The school makes very good provision for personal, social and health education and children gain much in independence and confidence because of this programme. Each day during 'circle time' the children explore emotions and feelings, learn to appreciate others and understand their role in the school and its community.
15. The staff are well qualified and experienced and contribute much to learning. They are well trained and enthusiastic about developing their skills. Staff development is organised very effectively and has helped to create a highly effective team. New staff are given much guidance and the school makes an excellent provider of training for students. The school's accommodation is very good and staff make the most of it by exhibiting children's work and creating stimulating displays which draw the children's attention. Staff make very good use of the grounds to enhance learning and use the outdoors as another classroom. The school has very good resources and they are used very well to promote skills, knowledge and understanding.

Care, guidance and support

All children at this school receive an excellent quality of care, guidance and support. The overall quality of the care provided is better now than it was at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The kindness and sensitivity of all staff ensure that parents and children feel confident that any problems will be handled fairly and effectively
- A comprehensive and practical range of policies support the excellent welfare provision
- Induction arrangements for children and parents are excellent

Commentary

16. The school is a clean, pleasant, very interesting and stimulating environment. All staff have a very good awareness of the importance of health and safety issues and parents trust the school to safeguard the welfare of their children. Good risk assessments are carried out and appropriate records are kept. Fire evacuation is practised regularly and the provision for first aid is very good. The headteacher has overall responsibility for child protection issues and awareness amongst all staff of the crucial nature of this aspect of care is very high. Supervision of the children at all times is excellent and the children are taught how to play safely and eat healthily.

17. Because of the excellent relationships between the children and all adults in the school, the children have complete trust in their teachers and know that they will help them if they are unhappy. All staff are very sensitive to each child's needs and this has a very important impact on the day-to-day planning and the very good progress the children make. Constant monitoring of individual achievement enables early identification of any emerging concerns and action to be taken. There are excellent opportunities for parents to talk to staff at the beginning of each session to pass on any concerns, or simply to stay with their child until he or she is happily settled. The induction process for new parents and children is excellent, including a home visit and visits to the school in the summer term prior to starting. Staff who work in the playgroup also work in the nursery and this gives those children transferring from the playgroup a sense of continuity and security. The effectiveness of the induction process is evident in the fact that the children arrive at school happily and parents have every confidence that their small children will be well cared for.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has an excellent partnership with the majority of parents. There are very good links with the local community and with other schools. The quality of these partnerships has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high regard for all that the school does for them and for their children
- The quality of information provided for parents about their children's progress and the work of the school is excellent
- The school provides an excellent range of opportunities for parents to learn how to help their children at home

Commentary

18. The school is very responsive to parents' views and needs. The formal and informal information provided for parents is of high quality, practical and accessible. There are opportunities for formal consultation about children's progress during the year and a comprehensive and useful written report at the end of the year. The close contact and trust between parents and staff promotes a constant exchange of information and enables support to be put into place at an early stage if needed. The regular newsletters and notice boards keep parents up-to-date with activities and many opportunities are created for parents to see and understand what their children are doing.

Information is provided about forthcoming activities and courses are offered to parents to learn how they can help their children at home. The response of many parents to all these opportunities is excellent and they and their children benefit considerably as a result. There is a small number of parents who do not send their children to school regularly and provide little support for their learning at home. Several parents meet regularly to make resources to extend children's learning at home. They also helped to organise the very successful summer fair which raised considerable funds and involved many members of the local community. The Breakfast Club and wrap-around provision are much appreciated by parents, confident that their children are safe and very well cared for. Staff listen to parents' views and these are taken into account in the day-to-day work of the school and in planning future development. Parents know that any concerns or complaints will be dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively.

19. The children visit interesting places within the local community and a number of businesses contribute raffle prizes for the fund raising events. The very close links that the school has established with support agencies provide parents with easy access to advice and help should they need it. There are very good systems to ensure effective transition to the next stage of education and strong, mutually beneficial, links with the other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Very good leadership and management are highly successful in promoting children's learning and achievement. The school is managed very well. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership by the headteacher is very effective
- The staff are a highly effective team who are enthusiastic about helping the children to achieve their full potential
- There is rigorous monitoring and support of teaching
- The school has good strategic plans based on thorough analysis of the children's performance
- Finances are used well

Commentary

20. The excellent headteacher inspires her colleagues and leads the school with vision and flair. She has built a very competent team who have worked hard to improve the school's provision. Leadership, management and governance have improved since the previous inspection. The issues regarding planning, assessment and teaching have been tackled rigorously and have led to a much more focused and challenging curriculum. Children are at the heart of the school's work and this is reflected in the way in which staff have created an ethos in which all are valued and included. The school is highly inclusive and staff look beyond the immediate needs of children in the school, providing much support through family learning initiatives to enable parents to take part in their children's education. Parents are very impressed by the quality of education provided by the school and are full of praise for the headteacher and her staff.

21. A recent success in leadership has been the focus on improving the provision for mathematical development. Having identified weaknesses in the children's mathematical skills through thorough analysis of data and observation the school has introduced a new approach which is having a significant impact on the children's achievement. Another strength has been the review of planning and assessment which has tightened up the organisation of sessions and brought greater focus to learning. All staff are involved in planning and assessment and are a high performing team who share a common goal in ensuring success for children of all abilities. The teachers are very knowledgeable about the areas of learning and support their colleagues very well when introducing new initiatives. The headteacher monitors her colleagues' work and leads by

example. There is much rigour in monitoring teaching and learning and the outcome is to produce well focused training where needed. The school is always seeking ways in which it might improve and this is the result of an ambitious team who are dedicated to providing high quality education for the children. This commitment to improvement is part of the school's regular reviews of its strengths and weaknesses and leads to very effective strategic planning.

22. The school development plan is well crafted and contains sharply focused targets and measures of success. It is the work of all staff and governors and is a useful guide for school improvement. Governors have a keen interest in the school and monitor its performance well. The system of performance management is effective and challenging targets are set. Targets are linked to the priorities in the school development plan and monitored by the governing body. Governors keep up to date on the developments in nursery education through training and have a shrewd understanding of how to support the school through involvement in a variety of projects. The school's success in achieving a distinction in the Effective Early Learning project is a tribute to the well focused leadership, management and governance of the school. Staff and governors ensure that statutory requirements are fully met and have adopted good policies for race equality, special educational needs, disability and equal opportunities. The policies underpin the school's very good practice in these areas.

23. The school runs smoothly and effectively. The administration is very effective and parents speak highly of the standards of information provided and the wealth of opportunities organised to help them to improve their skills as educators. Management systems are very good and free time for the headteacher to be as involved in teaching and working with parents as possible. The school is an ideal provider of training opportunities for students who are supported very well. Very good financial planning and effective oversight of the finances and budget by the governors ensure that funds are used well. Good account is taken of best value when purchasing supplies and services and spending is linked carefully to the priorities in the development plan. Funding for specific projects have been used well to enhance the school's provision. Funds allocated for the provision for children with special educational needs are used highly effectively and supplemented through the school's resources. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are of high calibre.

Financial information

The school does not have a delegated budget. The local authority maintains responsibility for spending on staffing, maintenance and other services. The governors are well prepared for changes in the funding of the nursery which take effect this year.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well and standards are on a par with those expected for their age
- Staff focus very strongly on this area of learning and teaching is very good
- Excellent links are made with the other areas of learning
- Leadership is very effective

Commentary

24. The school's work in personal, social and emotional development contributes very much to the children's success in the other areas of learning. Staff provide a stimulating environment and plan interesting and exciting activities which motivate and enthuse the children and stimulate a desire to learn. The thorough analysis of the children's skills on admission to the school provide the staff with information they use to plan work that is matched well to the needs of individuals. Children who lack confidence or feel insecure are nurtured carefully. This is particularly the case with children with special educational needs who are given much support to enable them to participate fully in the curriculum. Many examples of individual care for these children were observed; for example, children who have difficulty in relationships and controlling their behaviour are dealt with firmly and fairly so that they learn to cooperate with others. Similarly, the needs of children with English as an additional language are quickly identified and resources and very good support provided so that the children become engaged in learning. These children are enthusiastic about the opportunities provided. The way in which staff work with parents also contributes much to the very good progress the children make in their personal, social and emotional development.
25. Through excellent relationships the adults establish an atmosphere of calm and purpose in which the children thrive. Staff encourage thoughtful and considerate behaviour and the children respond very well, showing a clear understanding of rules and routines. Children are kind and helpful towards each other; they help at clearing up time and are keen to please their teachers. The start to the school day provides very good opportunities for the children to take responsibility, such as for registering themselves and as helpers for the day to take charge of the weather chart. The first session provides very good opportunities for the children to make decisions about their own learning, and it is a tribute to the successful teaching that children settle quickly to work and maintain concentration for extended periods, especially when working with adults. Sharing is encouraged at snack time as the children take it turns to count out the cups and pass the plate of biscuits; this is done with much care and pride. Snack time provides a good opportunity for the children to socialise and to practise saying *please* and *thank you*.
26. In group time the staff initiate learning and focus on developing a variety of skills. The children enjoy these times and learn much. They work together well and become increasingly aware of the needs of others and the importance of working together and listening carefully. There is good emphasis given to taking turns and valuing each other. This is reflected in the very good work done on developing the children's awareness of different cultures and traditions. There are regular celebrations of key festivals, and visits to art galleries and the locality enable the children to gain an appreciation of the world around them. The children gain a good appreciation of the wider world in their studies of African art and produce some good creative work about stories from a range of cultures. The children show much care of plants and animals and the staff make this aspect of the area of learning an integral part of each day. Children watch fascinated as the African land snails move and enjoy feeding them. The guinea pigs attract much attention and the children are enthusiastic about taking care of them; some even bring special food from home as a treat. In circle time, the children listen attentively and are encouraged to talk about their feelings and to share their ideas. This was done exceptionally well when the adult made up a story about a lost "mummy crab". The children listened with increasing awe as the story unfolded identifying with the sad feelings of the family and the joy of her return.
27. The very thorough planning and well developed links between personal, social and emotional development and other areas of learning are strengths of the provision and ensure that learning is effective. The leadership and management of personal, social and emotional development are highly effective and all staff use similar methods and approaches to promote the children's

achievement. Much attention is given to monitoring the children's progress and recording key achievements. This information is shared with parents very effectively.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff provide an environment to stimulate language development
- Teaching and learning are good
- The assessment of the children's language skills has a very positive impact on planning work that matches the children's needs
- The children are good listeners but lack confidence in speaking

Commentary

28. The adults recognise the crucial importance of language development for the children who enter the nursery with language skills well below those expected for their age. The relationships between the children and the adults are very good. The children, therefore, listen very well when adults speak or read to them. However, their ability to respond appropriately or to ask questions is very limited. Staff do not always capitalise on opportunities to promote the children's speaking skills and reinforce new words with sufficient regularity. Nevertheless, the children are given a considerable amount of patient, well focused support and by their facial expressions and actions show that their understanding of what they hear is progressing very well. The children with English as an additional language benefit from the way adults take the trouble to help all the children to join in the activities and they make good progress. A group of lower attaining children achieved very well when the adult, during an activity involving hanging out washing on a clothes line, took care to repeat the names of the articles of clothing and ensured that the children used the range of vocabulary she wished them to learn.

29. The range of opportunities for speaking is well planned and intervention from adults is regular and well focused. However, when this is not possible, at times, during self-chosen activities, the children's poor vocabulary and limited language structures inhibit the quality and range of language they are able to use. This was the case when three children were engaged in a dressing up activity. The language used between them was very limited and hardly developed as they played. On the other hand, a group of children set the challenge of following clues to find a missing hen, were very well prepared for the range of language they needed to understand, and carried out the task with confidence and enjoyment. This is because the key language needed was repeated sufficiently for them to recognise it during the practical activity.

30. Books are prominently displayed and there are very good arrangements for encouraging the children to enjoy the library books which they borrow on a regular basis. They respond very positively to the illustrations when they look at books individually and when adults point to them in order to support the children's understanding of stories being read to them. Many of the children know how to turn the pages appropriately. A few children are beginning to recognise basic initial letter sounds but are not yet reaching expected levels for their age. There are many examples of writing such as labels, phrases attached to displays and instructions around the activity areas. The children are making good progress in recognising the messages contained in them. A few children are engaged in emergent writing, their marks on paper often including the spaces between letters and parts of letters being reproduced in recognisable form. This is

especially the case when they represent the children's own names. The adults are very helpful in demonstrating letter shapes to the children and encouraging them to practise in the sand tray, on the light-reflecting table as well as on paper and card. A writing table containing a good range of writing equipment ensures that materials are readily to hand. Regular assessment of writing ensures that the children's writing development is carefully tracked so that tasks can be matched to the needs of individuals. This area of learning is led and managed well. Staff make very good use of assessment to record the children's progress and to monitor how well they are doing. There is regular monitoring of teaching and good guidance to all staff.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and attain levels which are appropriate for their age
- Very good teaching makes skilful use of practical activities and resources
- This area of learning is led and managed very well

Commentary

31. Mathematical development has been the focus of recent curriculum developments at the school and number activities are very much a part of many of the activities provided. This has resulted in improving standards and the children's good understanding of number in the world around them. The displays in the nursery include many references to number and there are lots of resources to making learning focused and fun. The children concentrate very well in formal times when they are counting, sorting and matching. Guidance and encouragement are very strong features and the adults capitalise on any opportunities to get the children counting. This is done very well at the start of sessions when children count the number present in the group, work out who is absent and then say the numbers in sequence. Most count in a group, with adult help, to 10, although the younger children struggle. The adults overcome some of these weaknesses by singing number rhymes and using a variety of methods of counting such as number lines and using fingers and objects. The children make very good gains in learning numbers and the more able recognise several numerals. In one session the teacher skilfully developed the children's skills in adding on one and good use was made of mathematical vocabulary to develop understanding of "one more".

32. Boys and girls thoroughly enjoy playing games which involve numbers. They are taught very well and teachers focus on helping them to acquire the right language so they can talk meaningfully about the practical mathematics they do. In one lesson the nursery nurse had a washing basket full of clothes and the children sorted and matched them hanging them on a line. There was good discussion about the space available on the line and the children carefully moved washing to make room for more. Key words such as *pair* and *two* were repeated several times and the children gained in understanding and correct use of the words. The children have a limited knowledge of mathematical signs and symbols although they make very good progress in understanding the value of numbers up to five. Around the nursery, mathematics is made meaningful through the attractive displays of shapes often linked to pattern work. Children work carefully on these projects and produce well organised work which clearly illustrates sequences. The work is carefully labelled by teachers and much discussion is used to emphasise the properties of different shapes. In one lesson the children built a tower using different sizes of boxes in the correct sequence and then measured its height, looking amazed at the large numbers on the tape measure.

33. A factor that does inhibit mathematical development is the children's limited grasp of communication, language and literacy; however, the staff compensate for this well by using mathematical terms regularly, teaching number through rhymes and constant repetition. Children with special educational needs are given much extra help and often work alongside a member of staff. They participate well because the adults are skilful in explaining new words and demonstrating different ways of counting. Children with English as an additional language join in mathematical work enthusiastically and most are working at similar levels to their peers. Children use mathematical apparatus purposefully. The very good range of equipment, including opportunities to learn outside, enhances the children's mathematical awareness. Sometimes children use computers to improve their counting and number recognition skills and take much pleasure from these opportunities.
34. Teachers' planning is very good and staff have a good understanding of how to teach new ideas in a logical way so that the children grasp them well. The staff make very good use of observations and other assessments to identify the children's skills, knowledge and understanding and use the information to plan challenging tasks which stretch children of all abilities. The provision for mathematics has improved since the last inspection as the area of learning has been reviewed very thoroughly and good links made with other parts of the curriculum. Very good leadership and management have done much to raise the profile of mathematics in the school and this has resulted in improved standards. There is regular and well focused monitoring of teaching and learning and the results have been used to ensure consistency of approach among all staff.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well and come close to attaining expected levels for their age
- Teaching and learning are very good
- The children with special educational needs, such as motor control disabilities, are sensitively supported to ensure their inclusion in the full range of activities
- The outdoor area is used well to extend this area of learning
- Limited communication skills hamper the children's attainment

Commentary

35. Most of the children enter the nursery with a well below average understanding and knowledge of the world. This is compounded by the fact that their underdeveloped language skills inhibit their curiosity and their ability to share observations. Even though they are still not attaining at an age-appropriate level, they make very good progress and achieve well, for example as a result of their experiences at a local supermarket. An air of considerable excitement reigned as a group of children subsequently visited the "grocery store" in the classroom, handling and marvelling at the shapes, colours and textures of the fruit and vegetables and gleefully handing quantities to each other. The children are acquiring the early skills needed to work on the computer, such as using a roller ball mouse to move images on the screen, and have begun to control a programmable toy.
36. Small groups of children were very well supported to carry out an archaeological investigation during which they dug up various artefacts buried in compost. In spite of their limited understanding of the fact that these objects represented the past, they concentrated well on the activity and lovingly and safely laid out their buried bones and shards of Greek pottery. Their

facial expressions clearly showed that they regarded their finds as being special in some way. A very well equipped and imaginative sensory area supports scientific investigation such as a sound and texture board in the outside area, a mirror table, a tank for African snails and a cage for guinea pigs. Children were fascinated when working in the darkened sensory area, shining torches on suspended moving metallic strips, the surfaces of metal panels and looking at large scale moving images produced by a projector. At the same time, other children were encouraged to identify a range of different objects through using the sense of touch and smell, all the time supported by the adults' questioning. A very strong strand of the children's learning is the variety of cultural experiences they enjoy. Many displays of books, artefacts, garments and artwork promote the children's awareness of, and fascination for, different parts of the world. The outdoor area is used effectively and currently contains a garden centre where the children sell flowers and plant out their own at the appropriate time. In this area, they are encouraged to become familiar with, and discover how to use, a range of tools such as spades and trowels. The adults appropriately emphasise the safety aspect of these activities.

37. Staff teach very well and engage the children in purposeful activity. Planning is of high quality taking into account the needs of different groups. Children with special educational needs are supported very well. Boys and girls concentrate well on a variety of construction activities, at the same time exercising a degree of creative imagination as they change their designs. The construction of a tower and another of a human figure owed much to the children's observations during a walk to the neighbouring shops from where the church tower was visible. A good range of construction equipment is available to the children. Adults support them well to develop their construction ideas. A set of architects' drawings drew the children's attention to, and helped them to develop their understanding of, how buildings are constructed. The leadership and management of this area of learning are very effective. All aspects of the children's work are monitored carefully. This ensures that they engage in a well balanced programme of activities because the plans are modified according to the children's progress.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make very good progress, achieve very well and have skills that are well in line with those expected for their age
- The children enjoy all physical activities and are very well supported through very good teaching so that they develop confidence to tackle new challenges
- There is a good range of activities both indoors and outdoors

Commentary

38. The staff pay very good attention to all aspects of the children's physical welfare. They encourage and challenge the children and ensure that they participate safely in an appropriate level of physical activity. The co-ordination skills of the children are at differing levels, ranging from those who find balance or moving in different directions at speed difficult to some who have considerable strength and stamina relative to their age. This was very evident as children balanced while walking along the underside of a bench and continued to scramble through spaces and up on to a slide. A child suffering from a debilitating physical condition made very good progress to climb down a set of plastic steps safely and confidently. This is because the school has a very positive approach to enabling all the children to participate in the curriculum. Many children enjoy pedalling vigorously in a variety of wheeled vehicles. Others are at an early stage of steering so that they confidently navigate their way around obstacles. The outdoor area is well equipped

for children to test their strength as they carry and manoeuvre into place long pieces of piping and stack crates to make “buildings”.

39. Teaching and learning are very effective as the children are encouraged to develop and refine their skills. Their ability to hold drinking containers improves because there are ample opportunities for them to fill a wide variety of containers in the water tray. Children are encouraged to use large and small implements such as metal detectors, trowels, hammers and brushes. They manoeuvre trains along tracks and arrange vehicles in the sand tray as they make railroads, tracks and tunnels. All these experiences provide a positive preparation for using fine implements requiring greater control such as pencils, crayons, spanners for construction activities, pairs of scissors and a range of fixing implements.
40. The teaching and learning in this area, as in others, benefits from the very sensitive approach of the adults. They know their children very well, care deeply about their welfare and carefully assess what is appropriate for each child. Resources have recently improved and ensure that many indoor activities can be further developed outside. Very effective leadership and management underpin this area of learning. There is excellent record keeping of the children’s achievements and very good use of the information to plan the next steps in learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make very good progress overall and achieve very well, to be confidently on course to reach the early learning goals
- Teaching and learning are very good
- Resources are very good and fire the children’s imagination
- Attainment in music is above expectations for their age
- The quality of the children’s language during role play somewhat restricts their attainment in role play

Commentary

41. The teaching staff are very committed to providing a broad range of artistic experiences for the children. They plan and organise activities very skilfully so that all the children are able to take part. There are many opportunities for singing, using instruments and listening to a rich diet of music from many cultures. The school environment is attractive and contains several displays that interest the children and develop their awareness of beauty. For example, a display on an African theme contains attractive printed, patterned fabrics and examples of batik work as well as traditional hand crafted fabrics. Imaginative play is encouraged in the role-play areas that are well organised and resourced. The children enjoy using these facilities, but their below average language skills somewhat restricts their ability to be imaginative.
42. The children develop a good ear for recognising the sounds of various instruments such as thumb pianos, maracas, rain sticks, tambourines and others. Some children can hear and imitate rhythms such as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”. Several of their routine activities such as circle time are introduced by tuneful singing where the children have learned to sing softly or loudly.

43. The children enjoy opportunities to participate in art and craftwork. Their attainment is in line with what is expected in this area at this stage. One group has produced a very striking collage composed of a hammer, pieces of wood and nails, sprayed and decorated with a variety of glitter materials. Their portraits showing expressions of fear, happiness and anger are lively and show that they are able to create a composition containing a variety of materials such as wool, buttons and small paper shapes. The focus on Africa has resulted in interesting and vivid abstracts composed to patterns applied with a range of implements, overlaid with patches of sprinkled powder paints in colours normally associated with Africa. The children expressed awe and wonder as they applied a colour wash to a piece of fabric, on to which they scrawled shapes with wax, thus creating a batik. They revel in opportunities to handle different materials, using playdough, which they knead and shape, and enjoying the freedom to explore and experiment.
44. The role-play areas are kept fresh and inviting and link well with work in other topics. For example, a visit to Asda has been supplemented by the provision of a fruit and vegetable shop within the classroom. The children enjoy the experience of handling the merchandise. However, their ability to engage in creative dialogue while they “shop” is very limited, as is their knowledge of the names of some of the items.
45. Leadership and management are very good and the work of children and adults is monitored effectively. The adults keep careful records of what the children are able to do. They are very aware of the need to introduce a variety of creative activities and to provide models of suitable language, thereby extending the range of vocabulary and structures the children are able to use.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
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	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	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
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).