

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Comet Nursery School**

London

LEA area: London Borough of Hackney

Unique reference number: 100213

Headteacher: Mrs. Angela Mabhena

Lead inspector: Jane Lamb

Dates of inspection: 25 - 27 November 2003

Inspection number: 262849

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3-5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	57.5 Full time equivalent
School address:	20 Halcomb Street Hoxton London
Postcode:	NI 5RF
Telephone number:	020 7729 0936
Fax number:	020 7613 2980
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. John Carpenter
Date of previous inspection:	26 - 28 April 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Comet Nursery School serves a diverse and densely populated community, with high levels of deprivation. More than half of the children have English as an additional language and about a third of children are at a very early stage of learning English. Around three quarters of the children are of minority ethnic heritage, with the main community languages being Turkish, Yoruba and Twi. On entering the nursery many children speak very little English. This has an impact on their understanding of other areas of learning. The social and emotional development of many children is also well below average. There are substantial numbers of transient and refugee children and asylum seekers' children and higher than average numbers of children join or leave the nursery during the year. The school has a mixture of part-time and full-time children and there is extended day provision for some full-time children. There is the equivalent of 57.5 full-time children on roll. The school has identified 12 children as having special educational needs, and three of these children have statements of special need. The school works very closely with its community offering additional provision for parents and the community, extended provision for some children and community and parental support in the recently opened Family House. The school is part of Hoxton Sure Start project for children from birth to four years, and their families.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2153	Jane Lamb	Lead inspector	Communication, language and literacy Personal, social and emotional development Creative development English as an additional language
9388	Anthony Mundy	Lay inspector	
7418	Kath Rollisson	Team inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development Special educational needs
3574	Kanwaljit Singh	Team inspector	

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Comet Nursery is a very effective school with some excellent features.** Very strong and committed leadership and high quality provision and teaching, result in children achieving particularly well. Partnerships with parents and the community are excellent. Standards are likely to be in line with the goals children are expected to achieve by the end of reception in all areas, and in music and their personal, social and emotional development, standards are likely to exceed the goals. **The school currently gives good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the school is particularly strong; that of the headteacher is excellent
- Partnerships with parents and the community are excellent
- Very good teaching and learning ensure that children get a particularly good start to their education and achieve very well
- Provision is very good and is well matched to all children's needs, including those with special needs
- Provision for children with English as an additional language is very good
- Procedures for improving attendance and punctuality need to be applied more rigorously

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in teaching and learning, children's achievement, the leadership and management of the school, the extended provision and the links with parents and the community. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Children's achievement is particularly good.** The children learn quickly and although many start school with very little English, they make rapid progress in all areas and are likely to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year, in all areas. Standards in personal, social and emotional development and music are likely to be higher than the goals by the end of reception. Their achievement in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is particularly good. Children achieve very well also in their personal, social and emotional development. Very effective use of skilful staff to support children with special needs results in these children making good progress towards their targets and achieving very well. All staff support well the achievement of children at an early stage of learning English and they make rapid progress. The school operates as a secure, friendly and harmonious community and **children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** They have particularly positive attitudes to school and behave well. They show very good respect for each other and get on well with staff and other children. The school has satisfactory systems to improve **attendance and punctuality, but these need to be applied more rigorously.**

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.**

**Teaching by all staff is particularly good.**

Staff expect a great deal from the children in their learning and behaviour and the children respond well to this. They have very good levels of understanding about how young children learn and the areas of learning to be taught. They operate particularly well as a team and are trained well to improve their professional expertise and keep it up to date. Expert teaching and very effective support means that children who are just beginning to speak English, learn quickly. Staff work extremely closely with parents as partners in their children's learning and give them very good support to enable them to help their children at home. All staff treat children with great respect, and

meet their individual needs particularly well. As a result staff and children get on very well together. The great respect and courtesy shown by staff set children a good example. Children enjoy a very rich, interesting and broad range of experiences within a curriculum, which is enhanced by a good range of visits and other activities. Good account is taken of children's cultural backgrounds, and some staff at the school reflect these cultures and speak the children's home languages. The staff are always seeking ways of improving children's experiences and are committed to the children and their parents. This ensures that the partnership with parents is very productive, and that children benefit well from it. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well across a wide range of areas of learning. The school cares particularly well for the children, and staff are very good at listening to them and responding to their needs. The school values parents' views, and the partnership with parents and the community is excellent. There are extensive links with the community which benefit children and their parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are very good and the leadership of the headteacher is excellent.** The very strong vision, innovation and commitment of the headteacher and her high levels of understanding of very young children are major factors in the school's very good effectiveness. The school has built a very strong team of staff who constantly seek to improve the provision for the children and their parents and continue to raise achievement. The governors share in this vision and are very effective in supporting and challenging the school. The school is very well managed on a day-to-day basis. The deputy headteacher and other senior staff offer high levels of support and professional expertise that have a very good effect on the leadership and management.

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

Parents hold the school in particularly high regard and are happy about all areas of provision for their children. They are particularly happy with the teaching, the leadership and management and the arrangements for settling in the children when they start the nursery. They are very pleased that their children like school and are treated fairly. There were no areas of concern. The children have been asked what they think about the school. They said that they like it and enjoy playing with others. They suggested a number of ways in which the school could be improved. These included getting a cat, buying more bricks, and moving the school to the seaside.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Apply more rigorously the existing strategies for improving attendance and punctuality.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

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

Children's achievement throughout the school is very good in all areas of learning. They are likely to reach or exceed the goals expected by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Standards in personal, social and emotional development and music are likely to be higher than the goals by the end of reception. Children who have English as an additional language achieve very well and most will reach the goals in all areas except speaking by the end of reception. Those with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them and their achievement is very good also.

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

- Standards have been maintained generally since the last inspection despite the attainment of many children entering the school being lower than before.
- Children are well prepared for the next phase of their education and are likely to reach and sometimes exceed the goals by the end of the reception year.
- The school has improved children's achievement since the last inspection.
- Children at the early stages of learning English make rapid progress.
- Children who have special educational needs achieve very well.

#### **Commentary**

1. By the time they leave reception children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals, which are the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, in all areas, and are likely to exceed the goals in their personal, social and emotional development and music. The intake of the school has changed significantly since the last inspection, with more children with English as an additional language and more who are well behind in their language development and their social and emotional development. Despite this, the school ensures that children are likely to reach or sometimes exceed the goals in all areas of learning by the end of reception. Children's achievement is very good in all areas of learning, often from well below average levels of attainment when they start school; this achievement has improved very well since the last inspection. Children's learning skills are particularly good throughout the school. Staff use information and communication technology well to support all areas, and children are developing good skills using computers. Very early literacy and number skills are developed particularly well across a wide range of activities.
2. The school makes constant adjustments and improvements to the provision and teaching, based on close monitoring of standards and children's learning. If any barriers to learning are identified they are dealt with or become the focus of teaching; for example, to improve boys' involvement in language work and creative activities, activities were made more interesting for boys and a very effective male support assistant was employed. This monitoring results in consistency of standards, through ensuring that children are well supported with their individual needs. For example, staff use the outdoor play areas very well across many areas of learning, including physical development, and they focus particularly well on raising standards in children's skills in drawing, painting, writing, cutting and glueing.
3. All staff work hard to develop children's English. As a result children achieve particularly well in communication, language and literacy, generally meeting the goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Many children are at a very early stage of English acquisition and their very good achievement is directly related to the strong leadership, staff training, skilful teaching and high expectations. These strengths ensure that achievement in



other areas of learning, such as mathematical, physical and creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, is very good. Children are helped to understand what they are learning, and are often supported in their home languages by skilful bilingual staff.

4. Children who have special educational needs are particularly well supported by the staff, and those with individual education plans receive the modified support which they need to progress well. This is enhanced by very good additional support from school staff, visiting therapists and learning support specialist teachers, and the daily staff meetings held to discuss children's progress. The school has made very good improvements in raising children's achievement since the last inspection, bearing in mind the wider range of children's home languages it now caters for and the other changes in children's attainment on entering the nursery.

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

Children have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. They enjoy the harmonious and stimulating environment and are eager to learn. Their personal, social and emotional development is very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and very good in social and cultural development. Attendance has been improving steadily over the last year but procedures for improving attendance need to be applied more rigorously.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's personal development is very good, they are keen to learn, and greatly enjoy a wide variety of activities.
- Relationships are very positive and children generally behave well.
- The school values its diverse community, and celebrates many cultures.
- The school provides good spiritual and moral education and very good social and cultural education.
- The procedures for improving attendance and punctuality are not applied sufficiently rigorously.

### **Commentary**

5. Children come happily and enthusiastically to school each day. They play with the activities set out for them or wait calmly with their parents until their teachers welcome them into the classrooms. They learn positive attitudes by observing the excellent relationships between their parents and the nursery staff. They have good concentration, and often focus on activities for extended periods of time. Their behaviour is good in classrooms, and is often very good outside and in their family table groups at lunchtime. Staff regularly praise the children for their efforts and personal kindnesses. Staff manage the children very well and deal very effectively with occasional incidents of challenging behaviour which could disturb other children's learning and the progress of activities. Children are likely to exceed the goals in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of reception, particularly in their independent learning and confidence.
6. The school promotes the spiritual development of the children well. For example, in a very good mathematical session, children listened attentively to 'the sound of the sea' in conch shells. When observing patterns in nature, they were amazed by tiny sea shells, and by the variety of colours in a rainbow.
7. Staff are very good role models. Very good relationships between staff and children promote strong moral values and sustain a warm, secure environment for learning. Most children listen carefully to adults. They are considerate and polite to each other and to visitors, and they understand the difference between right and wrong. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare. Some children need, and receive, skilful support when they cannot fully control their actions.
8. The children's personal qualities, self-esteem and social confidence are developed very successfully. In assemblies children sing vigorously and tunefully. They enjoy singing together

and performing. During the inspection, two girls wore African robes and had 'babies' on their backs, while the rest of the children and staff rocked and sang a song in Yoruba with good rhythm. Children co-operate well as they eat together at breakfast, lunch and tea; for example, they learn to spread butter on toast at breakfast and to eat without help.

9. Children quickly learn to be independent. Each day, they register themselves confidently by placing their name tags correctly on a chart. They select suitable materials for activities, and can control a computer printer independently. When preparing for sessions in physical development, they undo buttons and zips on their clothing. In small or large groups, they happily share materials and ideas. For example, a small group played in the home corner, amicably sharing and giving each other roles.
10. Children respect and enjoy aspects of the many cultures represented in the school. This prepares them particularly well for life in a multicultural society. Through meeting specialist visitors, and through the many experiences provided by staff, children enjoy a variety of performances, music, art and food. A teddy bear, Hetty Hoxton, is taken by families on trips, and then brings back to the school news and things from other schools in Hackney and other places world wide.
11. Attendance has been improving steadily during the past four terms. However, the school's procedures for improving attendance are not applied consistently, and families are not always contacted promptly about unexpected absence. Most children arrive in good time in the morning, but some parents are persistently late, which means their children miss part of the session.

## Attendance

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002-2003**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	14.60	School data	3.40

*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 quality of education provided by the school is very good. The strengths are;

- the high quality of teaching and learning.
- the breadth and richness of the curriculum.
- the wide range of extended provision.
- particularly good care of children and taking account of their views.
- excellent partnerships with parents and the community.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is very good and consequently children's learning is particularly good. The assessment of children's work is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have very good expertise in how young children learn and are imaginative and lively.
- Support staff and bilingual staff are particularly well used.
- Staff have high expectations and challenge the children to learn well.
- Assessment and tracking of children's achievement are very good and closely linked to the planning of children's activities.

### Commentary

12. Teaching and learning overall are very good, and are consistently strong in all areas of learning, with some excellent teaching seen in music. The areas of learning are taught in specific sessions, and also across all the planned activities. This contributes to the high quality of children's learning and their consistently very good achievement. The school has developed good systems of identifying the professional needs of staff, and provides good training both from outside and within the school, which ensures consistent practice. This has a strong impact on the children's very good learning and achievement. Staff are very experienced, knowledgeable and confident in their understanding of how to teach the areas of learning, and of how to teach very young children with specific learning needs, such as early English skills. This is more important than ever, bearing in mind the wider range of children's home languages and attainment the school now has to cater for. Children's behaviour is managed very effectively ensuring that children learn well.
13. The strong team ethos is reflected in teaching; with children being taught in two linked class areas each led by very confident staff and moving from activity to activity. There is very good monitoring of the children's involvement in activities, and a high quality discussion at the end of each day about how individual children have learnt. Assessment information is then shared with the whole class team including key workers for particular children. This contributes to staff having a very clear understanding of what children have achieved and what they need to learn next. Staff are imaginative and lively in their planning and teaching of a wide range of stimulating activities. As a very co-operative team, they share their skills and expertise well. Information technology is used well. This contributes to children's very good achievement. The development of social and personal skills, mathematical skills and English language is a major focus of all teaching and leads to quick progress in basic skills and good access to other areas of learning. Boys and girls learn equally well, and staff target areas for improvement very well, based on monitoring gender differences in learning.
14. The staff includes some bilingual speakers and very skilful support staff, including a Turkish speaking community outreach officer and another male community outreach officer. These benefit the children's learning. Bilingual staff are very successful in ensuring that children are included by speaking and writing in the children's home languages, alongside English, to ensure that they understand. They also support the assessment of children both in their home languages and in English. This is particularly useful for very early language learners and for children who have special needs.
15. The excellent partnership with parents, which is vital to the children's learning, is enhanced by the high levels of commitment by the staff to parents as the first teachers of their children. Staff and parents know very well the importance of structured play in young children's learning. Many displays incorporate home languages and interpretation and translation are important ways of giving parents information to support children's learning.
16. The leadership of the school is committed to excellence and this is shown in the very good levels of challenge for children set by all staff. Particularly positive, kindly and caring relationships with staff develop children's confidence in trying new experiences, encouraging them to move on and consolidate their learning. This promotes high levels of achievement and secure and thorough learning. The children respond well and learn with very good focus and extended concentration. Many children are very confident and enjoy exploring new activities on their own; for example, when they use computers, paint, print and make models. A strength of the teaching is the confidence of staff in knowing when to stand back and allow children independence, and when to intervene and support them. The children enjoy activities, learn to share, take turns and co-operate. Because of the strong focus on personal and social development they acquire basic learning skills quickly. For example, in the pretend post office children systematically chose a card, 'wrote' on it, put it in an envelope, stamped it and put it in the post box without any adult prompting. Higher-attaining children are extended well, because teaching targets the needs of individual children. Plans are prepared for every child so that all improve their achievement. Children with special needs are very well provided for. Individual

plans support their learning very well and enable them to make good progress towards their targets. The school benefits from very good support from the learning support service of the local education authority and from speech therapists who add significantly to the wealth of teaching expertise.

17. Staff plan a wide and exciting range of learning activities and use their skills creatively. These activities link well to the ‘Stepping Stones’ for learning, which lead to the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Learning is very well organised into specific areas. Children are allowed to choose, or are targeted for, activities based on previous observations and assessment. There are also high focus activities led by adults for targeted groups. These are planned in depth, and are often assessed. Assessment overall is very good. It is particularly clear, well organised and thorough. Staff keep a wide range of evidence from observations, samples of work, photographs and tracking to produce particularly good records of children’s progress. This is used well to decide what children need to learn next and to set individual targets. The children are starting to understand how well they are doing and are very proud of their achievements. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, in the quality of teaching and learning, assessment, use of computers and the number of support staff.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	15	9	2	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 provided by the school is very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An innovative curriculum provides a rich and balanced basis for learning and helps children to achieve very well.
- The very good leadership of the teachers, competent learning support staff and effective teamwork have a very positive impact on children’s achievement.
- Planning, management and evaluation of the curriculum are very good.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good.

**Commentary**

18. The curriculum is innovative, very well planned and provides a rich and balanced basis for learning. It enables children to achieve very well. It is relevant to individual needs and prepares children well for the next stage of their education. Children enjoy coming to school and were very happy with the provision made for them.
19. There have been significant improvements in the curricular provision since the last inspection. Rigorous systems are now in place for monitoring how groups of children and individual children use the different activities set up for them. As a result, all children, girls and boys, experience enough breadth and balance in what they do to ensure their rounded development. The planning and assessment for the development of early literacy skills, and for the development of physical skills out of doors, are now very effective. Comprehensive, individual education plans now ensure that children have their special educational needs met fully. The very good leadership and management of the school have had a strong influence on these improvements.

20. All areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are taught in each session. Constant use of both outdoor and indoor areas for many of the activities, promotes skills in more than one area of learning, which though inter-linked, do not lose their separate nature. Activities are planned around several themes, which have relevance and meaning for children and enhance their learning. The story of 'The Big Red Bus' currently triggers many activities. A room for exploring light and dark, and opportunities to observe work on a nearby building site, arouse children's curiosity about the world around them. The very good emphasis throughout the nursery on children's personal, social and emotional development and early language skills, promotes high achievement in these areas. Physical skills are very well developed indoors and outside. Traffic surveys and work with computers add interest for children who achieve very well. Careful routines are established through a system of focused and general tasks, which children adjust to very well. The 'key worker' system, whereby a member of staff works closely with, and monitors, the learning of a small group of children, is very effective in meeting individual needs. Talking regularly with the children ensures that children's views are incorporated into planning. A formal meeting takes place daily, when all staff review teaching and learning. This means that individual children are monitored and assessed daily, have appropriate experiences and are included.
21. The curriculum is enhanced by the very effective use of the community. Visits to Hainault Forest, the Science Museum, shops, a building site and the library, all enrich the children's experiences and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. A breakfast club and an after-school club provide other experiences for full-time and part-time children. These children have opportunities to relax in the Family House before and after the normal school day. Provision for the extended day is of a high standard, with activities arranged to meet children's needs. Recent evaluations suggest that it contributes to the high level of achievement in personal, social and emotional development. Arising from the school's recognition of the importance of the parents' role in children's development, several other innovative projects to support families and carers, are having an impact on children's learning. These include family numeracy and literacy programmes and support services for young families and for dads and male carers. Counselling for relationships and parenting and family learning programmes also have a positive effect on children's all-round healthy development.
22. The school has a very effective team of teachers. It provides positive leadership for the very good learning support staff who represent most of the communities that the children grow up in and their languages. Many of the support staff are bilingual and can help children in their home language where appropriate. All staff are very well trained and knowledgeable about how young children learn. Many have specific expertise, such as supporting children with English as an additional language. As a result, these children achieve very well and other staff are supported in developing additional skills. Staff with appropriate training and expertise, provide teaching targeted to the individual education plans of children with special educational needs, enabling them to achieve very well. The high number of support staff ensure that all children are included and participate fully in all aspects of the curriculum. All children are well prepared for their future schooling. Accommodation and resources are good and contribute to the very good progress children make, including those who have special needs. Additional resources for science and ICT have been identified in the school's development plan.
23. Children who have special educational needs receive very good targeted support. As a result of the consistently high standard of teaching, and additional outside support and therapy through the Learning Trust learning support team, they achieve very well in all the areas of learning. Their individual education plans enable them to make very good progress towards a specific number of attainable, focused targets. Detailed records of all reviews, and comprehensive portfolios of children's work and progress are kept. The strong leadership of the headteacher, who is the co-ordinator for special educational needs, has a significant effect on the provision in this area. Parents are consulted and informed about their children's progress at all stages and staff routinely work very well in developing partnerships with the families.

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

The school has very good procedures for ensuring children's care, welfare, health and safety. Staff know all the children very well and are sensitive to their individual needs. Child protection procedures are well known by staff and followed effectively in the event of any concerns. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance for children.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is responsible for child protection, and all adults in the school have a good understanding of child protection procedures.
- The school ensures that children work in a friendly, warm and secure environment.
- Each child receives very effective support, advice and guidance.
- Teachers and other adults know the children well, and respond quickly to their needs.
- All the children are included in activities.

### **Commentary**

24. The procedures for ensuring the welfare and well being of the children are very good, and are a high priority for the headteacher. This has been maintained well since the last inspection. Staff understand, and very sensitively carry out, child protection procedures. The system, where each child has an adult key worker, develops close relationships between children and adults. During the day, staff observe and report to key workers, who then record the activities by children in their groups. At the end of the day, staff meet to discuss individual children's work and plan the next steps for learning. All children receive very good care and support from their key workers and other adults.
25. Adults listen carefully to children, and respond sensitively to their day-to-day comments and suggestions. Before the inspection, staff carefully recorded children's responses to the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire. Bilingual staff provide specific support and translation to children and families who are early English speakers. All adults have very good knowledge of children's personal and social development. Children's participation in activities is sometimes photographed, and examples of their best work, is saved in useful records of achievement. The meticulous recording of achievement provides excellent information for parents, and for the teachers when children start in reception.
26. For those children who attend before, and after, the normal school day, there are very good facilities for extended care, and for breakfast and tea clubs. Children benefit from the wide range of planned activities, and the care and support they receive through the full school day. Activities are planned carefully so that children do not repeat the morning's activities. More relaxed activities are scheduled for the end of the day.
27. Activities in the Family House next to the school provide excellent 'drop-in' support to families. The house is supervised by experienced staff and attendance there is informal. Parents meet and exchange views in a homely atmosphere. They can talk to specialists while their children benefit from a special and valuable link between home and school. Sessions to support groups of very young parents, and for fathers and male carers, are increasingly popular.
28. Procedures for settling children into the nursery prepare parents very well for the first day at school. Each day, parents choose either to stay in the classrooms and help with activities, or to leave unobtrusively. When the time comes similar thoughtful and effective procedures prepare children for transfer to reception classes in primary schools.
29. From the moment children start visiting the 'drop in' centre and before they start at the nursery, children are carefully observed, assessed and monitored. This is very effective and is used well to identify early on children's specific or special educational needs at an early stage. Children with special educational needs are given very good support which helps them to make good progress towards the targets set for them. Monitoring is used well to measure

progress and helps staff to set targets for individual children or small groups of children, including higher-attainers and those with specific aptitudes. For example, a child doing very well on the computer was given specific extension programs to work on. This enables staff to provide greater challenge in line with children's needs. Staff listen very well to children and take account of their views about school and what they like best.

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

The school has developed excellent links with parents and works very closely with them to support children's learning. There are excellent links with the community that greatly enhance the educational provision at the school and within the local area. Working relationships with other schools and colleges are very good. The extended services for parents and the community are excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides very good information for parents, and involves them fully in their children's education.
- Parents are welcome at all times. Their special skills and interests are valued, and are used to enrich the curriculum.
- Written reports on children's achievement and development are exceptionally informative.
- The school has established an excellent range of programmes and services to support parents and the local community.
- As a result, parents are better equipped to enrich children's learning.
- Strong links have been developed with other schools and colleges.

### **Commentary**

30. Parents' views were particularly positive at the pre-inspection meeting, and were confirmed by exceptionally favourable responses to the parents' questionnaire. Parents feel welcomed and regard themselves as an important part of the school community. Help from parents and friends supports and extends the children's daily activities. For example, a volunteer helper supervises children in baking and was seen helping them to make fairy cakes. The school tries regularly to increase the number of volunteer helpers.
31. The parent-teacher association is very active, and organises social and fund raising events to supplement the school budget. Recently the association purchased colour printers for classrooms, and funded a number of outings and activities for the children. The association has a very good working relationship with school governors. The school offers a very good range of family learning and parental support services, including citizen's advice and relationship counselling.
32. Parents receive very good information about the nursery curriculum. Family workshops explain what the school does in language and mathematical development, and advises parents on how to share books at home with their children. At termly consultations, parents and key workers discuss children's achievement and targets. Written reports on children's progress and achievement are exceptionally well written and inclusive. Each report contains a summary of a child's progress in the nursery, and the results of an interview where the child's responses were recorded. The reports provide parents, and the primary schools to which the children will be moving to, with excellent records of children's all round achievement and personal development. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain much useful information.
33. The school's involvement with the community is excellent and the recently opened Family House is used very well to provide extended services for parents, prospective parents and other community members. The 'drop in' service provides four sessions a week for children

up to three years old. Children learn about school routines, develop social skills, and get used to the nursery staff before starting regularly at school. Parents and staff find that those children who attend these sessions are more confident, and settle into school more quickly. They help to develop children's language skills and allow early identification of any specific needs. This provision has significantly improved since the previous inspection.

34. The range of activities to develop parents' learning skills is excellent. The course in information technology helps many parents to gain skills for future employment. The family literacy and numeracy courses help parents to develop their own skills in English and mathematics. It also equips them with strategies to support their children's learning. During the inspection, the 'Hackney Children Stepping Forward Project' had a preliminary meeting to enlist membership for the next term's course. This was very well attended. The discussion showed that the parents who had already attended found it very much improved their skills in childcare.
35. The school has been very successful in liaising with outside agencies to get staffing to support activities and courses run in the school. Parents attend courses in the Family House but it is also used for crèche facilities. Children undertake a wide range of activities under the guidance of trained staff. This improves young children's learning immensely and they settle quickly when they start at the nursery. Various community groups use the facilities in the evening and income from letting helps to offset the costs of the House.
36. Parents and community members who have children with special educational needs are given very good opportunities to seek advice and guidance from professional people, including a psychologist and a social worker. Parents use the 'drop-in' facilities and meet the professionals free of any distraction from children. 'Hackney Young Families', 'Single Fathers' and special educational needs groups, are all attended well and support both parents and the children's achievement very effectively.
37. Very well organised breakfast and after-school clubs further support parents and enhance children's learning. One parent commented; 'It is because of this support that I go to college for three days knowing fully well that my child is in a safe and secure environment and benefiting from professional care and education'. Children receive many opportunities to visit the local area as a means of extending their learning and personal development. For example, during the inspection children went to a local road to survey the traffic, as part of their mathematical development. Visitors to the school support children's learning in areas such as music, cooking from many cultures, and gardening.
38. The school has very good links with other educational institutions. The school liaises with playgroups which feed the nursery, and with primary schools to which children transfer. The school hosts the area Early Years network and provides training to staff who work in schools, day nurseries, playgroups and the private sector. The training in topics such as literacy, outdoor play, record keeping and assessment, has been well attended. Partnership with Goldsmiths University, for teacher training is very strong and students regularly work in the school. Student teachers are carefully supported, and they make a valuable contribution to school life. Settling-in programmes for primary schools are supported well, and the school has plans to improve further liaison and transfer arrangements. Each year, secondary school students are welcomed for work experience in childcare.



## Example of outstanding practice

**The school has an outstanding partnership with parents, who think the school is excellent, enabling children to learn and achieve particularly well. Links with the local community are outstanding.**

Underpinning the school's success is the establishment of high levels of trust between parents and school. This leads to very high level of parental involvement in their children's education. This continues during the first months of school life when parents are encouraged to remain with their children and help during sessions. As they gain confidence, parents learn about the activities and support available to them, and discover how children learn and how they can help. They feel that their contributions are valued and that they are an important part of the school community. They are kept well informed about their children's education and encouraged to make their own contributions in shaping the life of the school. The excellent level of parental support greatly benefits the school in a number of ways. Great warmth and goodwill are extended to staff by parents when children arrive or leave. There was outstanding support for the school in the parents' meeting, and in the questionnaire with no areas of concern or dissatisfaction and a very high percentage of response. The school's involvement with the community is outstanding. The school site is used very well as a resource for the community and people are encouraged and welcomed to join activities - adult education classes and courses, advice and consultancy sessions - and to use the Family House for children's 'drop-in' and crèche facilities. Professionals such as special educational needs teachers, psychologists, staff from Sure Start, Citizens Advice Bureau and Hackney Children Stepping Forward, all work very well with the school staff under the excellent leadership of the headteacher. This benefits the children and parents enormously. Many young parents bring their children to the 'drop in' sessions and get involved in their children's learning. Courses are very well attended and many people have started attending colleges to improve their training further. Very good use is made of the local area for children's learning and personal development; there are many visits out of school and visitors to the school. The school is used particularly well by other early years' practitioners, to see effective practice, and for professional training.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are very good and the leadership and vision of the headteacher are excellent. The management and governance of the school are very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high levels of expertise and commitment and gives inspirational leadership for the improvement of the school.
- The school has created an extremely effective team whose professional expertise is very good.
- Senior staff and governors have very good expertise and support the school particularly well.
- The extended provision, staff and resources are very well used and managed.

### Commentary

39. The excellent leadership of the headteacher is the major factor in the school's particular effectiveness and its very good improvement since the last inspection. The vision, innovative skill, understanding and commitment of the headteacher are outstanding, and she has appointed staff of a very high calibre, to form a strong team who share her vision. The deputy headteacher, senior staff and governors are highly committed and support the school well. They contribute a great deal to the overall very good leadership and management. The school strives constantly to improve and extend provision to meet the needs of the children and parents. Leadership and management have improved very well since the last inspection and areas identified for improvement have been dealt with fully.
40. The school regularly uses school self-evaluation and monitoring to plan training, meet children's and parents' needs and make innovations. It is extending this self-assessment further in a new project with another local nursery school. An example is the close monitoring of achievement by different groups of children and the very good interventions used to improve this, resulting in better uptake and quality of learning, for instance, by boys. Staff have high levels of energy and commitment and are very skilful educators of young children; this

contributes to the high quality of education and very good achievement by children. The ethos and relationships within the school are particularly warm, caring and respectful. The school is a multi-racial community and parents, children and staff represent a wide variety of cultures who work together in harmony and trust. A skilful male outreach officer offers a very good role model for boys, and works very well to improve their participation in language and creative activities.

41. The school works particularly hard to identify and meet the needs of the children and their parents. For example, the extended care meets the needs of specific children and their parents who benefit from full-time provision, improving their learning and achievement. Particular strengths are the clear strategic planning, the management of the extended provision, provision for children with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language. The school has forged an excellent partnership with parents and the community. There is a strong focus and determination to initiate new projects and to see them through; for example the new Family House, formerly the vacant caretaker's house, which has been refurbished very successfully and now includes a wide range of 'drop-in' support facilities for families and children. This was funded jointly by the Hoxton Sure Start, Shoreditch Our Way and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and provides for very young children and their families. These innovations are part of an overall very good improvement since the last inspection and they have overcome many of the barriers to learning of children and parents in the community, by increasing uptake of places and offering support tailored to the children's specific needs before they start nursery, so raising their achievement.
42. A new governing body has recently been set up and will be receiving delegation of the full school budget in April 2004. Good support for the governors' new role has come from the local learning trust and from within the school. Governors have a very good range of expertise, give good support and challenge to the school and are very clear about its future development. Their support is very well informed, which enables full participation in discussions and developments and meets statutory requirements. There is particularly good trust in the headteacher by staff, governors and parents, and a clear, shared commitment to constant improvement, which includes planning for improvements to the building. The school improvement plan is very clear, focused and concise, and relates very well to the specific needs of the school. It is implemented and monitored well by senior staff and governors, and keeps the school moving towards its targets and aims. The school does not currently have a fully delegated budget, but has 'shadow' managed most of the school budget for the past three years. Spending decisions have been prudent and chosen for good value; for example, the decision to recruit and employ very experienced and skilful staff. The budget has been used well to raise standards and improve provision. This ensures that the school provides good value for money, in terms of the budget it receives and the very high quality of education provided.
43. The deputy headteacher teaches full-time and leads curriculum planning and assessment, and specific curriculum areas. She also shares responsibility for monitoring standards, planning and teaching, and oversees the progress of the children. The deputy headteacher shares the strong vision of the headteacher and adds an additional dimension to the breadth of the provision; for example, in leading teaching and contributing well to the day-to-day running of the school. The co-ordinators for areas of learning are very skilful, experienced and committed teachers. The school is part way through a useful programme of reviewing policies and provision in each area of learning, and is already having a good effect on provision. The systems and day-to-day management of the school are very good. The administrator is very welcoming to parents, who sometimes speak very little English and are unfamiliar with how things work in this country. Support is always available from the administrator, community workers and the bilingual staff to help parents to deal with problems and so help their children. The effective programme for identifying staff needs and training makes a strong contribution to the quality of education and the children's very good learning and achievement.

44. The staff are very well used and deployed and give a great deal of extra time to the school. There are some bilingual staff who add great expertise in their support for parents and children, and the translation and interpretation services they can give. The school building is purpose-built and spacious and is used well. It makes a safe, exciting and lively learning environment with good outdoor play facilities. The newly opened Family House extends space for children, their parents and the community, as well as giving additional space for the school. The decoration of the building, particularly outside, is worn and there are plans to improve and extend the building in the near future. This will include redecoration. Resources are good and are very well organised and used by staff. Computers are outdated but are still being used constantly by the children throughout sessions and before school. There are plans to gradually renew them.
45. Teaching English as an additional language is very well led and the expertise of the co-ordinator is shared well; this is a key factor in children's high achievement. Many innovations are planned as part of the programme for developing information technology, including extending the use of digital cameras and getting better links with the Internet. The school supports children with special educational needs particularly well. The headteacher is the co-ordinator and has very strong expertise. There is very early identification of concerns, and support is available following the first 'drop-in' visit to the Family House. Children's individual plans have very clear targets that are monitored well. There is a particularly high level of commitment to inclusion, and children's needs are very well met through support, including speech therapy, learning support from both within and out of the school, extended provision, well chosen activities and the rich and diverse curriculum.

### Example of outstanding practice

**The headteacher provides excellent leadership that is innovative and very well informed, making sure that children's and parents' needs are well met, ensuring inclusion and raising children's achievement.**

The school serves a community of great diversity and high levels of deprivation, including refugee and asylum seekers' children and many children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many children are at an early stage of learning English, and some are from unsettled and transitory families. The headteacher ensures that the school offers a safe, secure and accommodating environment for meeting these needs. High quality, extended and flexible provision by very skilled staff ensures inclusion and meets the children's very diverse needs. Some staff reflect the local communities, which encourages parents and children to trust the school and take advantage of the provision available. This raises the children's achievement. The school participates in a variety of local partnership organisations which have had a good impact on teaching and learning, and it shares its expertise well with local schools and providers.

### OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The effectiveness of the provision for and standards achieved by minority ethnic children and children with English as an additional language.

The overall provision and achievement in this area is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very hard to include all children and meet their specific needs.
- The achievement of minority ethnic children and children with English as their additional language is particularly good.
- Some staff represent the different community groups, including bilingual staff. They are highly skilled and committed to the school and raise achievement considerably.

## Commentary

46. The school is very well committed to inclusion and giving children the best possible start to school. The ethos of the school places great value on the individual child and is highly respectful of the different community groups it serves. Since the last inspection provision has been improved very well, and now includes extended care for some children, who benefit from before and after school provision. Parents and the community are very well supported in English, mathematics and computer skills, and in specific classes helping them to help their children to learn at home. The Family House 'drop-in' facilities include support services such as child psychology, support for the very young or lone parents, and citizen's advice, which help the parents and families particularly well. The close and trusting relationships with parents ensures that there is a firm partnership between parents and staff in teaching and children's learning, which raises achievement, particularly of minority ethnic children and those with English as an additional language.
47. The achievement of these children is particularly good, from a very low baseline in English and often in personal and social skills when they first start in the nursery. More than half of the children come from minority ethnic groups, and about a third are at the earliest stage of learning English. By the time they leave reception, they are likely to have reached the goals for children of that age in all areas of learning, although some may be below the goals in speaking skills - particularly in vocabulary. Children are also developing very good learning skills to prepare them for later school life. Children achieve particularly well and are often confident in their developing skills in the English language. For example, a boy who was a very early English learner, working with others on book making, kept up a commentary on what was in his book very confidently. He also had good concentration and was co-operative and hard working.
48. An important factor in the success of this provision is the very well qualified, committed and experienced staff and very experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Staff are very well thought of by the parents, who trust them and are able to communicate easily with them. The whole staff support teaching of English to children at the early stages of learning English, and this is very productive. The co-ordinator's skill is used well to train other staff in the best way of ensuring that children learn English quickly, and to understand what they are learning. The staff includes Turkish, Gujarati, Urdu, Arabic, French and Spanish speakers, who help with translation and interpretation. The staff are very skilful in assessing the children's needs in their home languages, and ensuring that children understand learning activities from the very beginning. This means that children make very rapid progress, particularly in English, which helps them in other learning. The school is closely linked with learning support teams and services which enhance the provision. There is also very effective support from the local authority Early Years team.

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

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

All areas of learning have shown good improvement since the last inspection. There is better teaching and learning, improvements in the curriculum and assessment and higher children's achievement. The effect of very good curriculum leadership and monitoring contributes significantly to this.

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

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

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

- The children generally are likely to exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year, even though standards were well below average when they started at the nursery.
- The children achieve very well because the very good teaching ensures they are supported, challenged and encouraged to work hard and take responsibility for their own learning at an early age.
- Children are particularly good at working independently.

#### **Commentary**

49. Very good teaching and learning ensure that children are likely to comfortably reach and frequently exceed standards expected by the end of the reception year. The staff work hard to ensure that the children are encouraged and supported to gain confidence and independence. As a result they develop very good learning habits and the lively environment provides interest and stimulation to encourage their motivation and co-operation. Even at this early stage, many children are able to maintain attention and listen quietly, and are confident to try new things and use their emerging skills in English. This leads to a settled and harmonious learning environment, well suited to very young children, some of whom are just beginning to learn English, and for those with special educational needs. They are supported and challenged by staff to work well with others, sharing and taking turns. For example, in a music activity, children watched others performing while they waited their turn to play instruments. Children are learning to behave well, and develop good social skills from working alongside other children.
50. Staff encourage independence and responsibility regularly but direct the children firmly but gently, supporting their self-esteem, when it is necessary. For example, when the children are playing in the pretend play areas they can usually share and take turns amicably with toys, only when children cannot solve disputes do staff intervene to ensure fairness. At the beginning of sessions, children take off their own coats, find their name tags and register themselves by choosing their initial letter to put their tag on. In this way they learn to be independent and responsible, and to recognise different letters. Children are able to work on their own for extended periods on the computers. They behave sensibly on the computers. They co-operate, concentrate on their activities and take turns with others. They are able to use the printers with some confidence and are keen to bring the print-out of their work to show staff and describe what they have done. Staff treat children and their parents with friendliness, courtesy and respect and are very good role models for developing these qualities in the children. There is a good emphasis on learning social skills, such as saying 'Hello' when they arrive at school, and sharing and eating happily together at lunchtime. They try hard to use cutlery, feed themselves well, and are supported well by the staff who sit with them. By the time they leave the reception class they are likely to be able to work on their own for extended periods, show good independence and generally behave courteously and respectfully, sharing and cooperating with others.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- Teaching and learning are very good, leading to very good achievement by the children.
- This area of learning is very well planned and assessed and there is a range of very interesting activities.
- Bilingual staff are a great benefit to the school.

### Commentary

51. Children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception in all areas and some children will exceed them. Children who are very early learners of English as an additional language are likely to reach the goals except in speaking. This is because many of these children start school at a very early stage of learning English and although they achieve very well, will not have developed enough English vocabulary and grammar by the end of reception, although their reading, writing and listening skills are likely to meet the goals. First-language English-speaking children are likely to reach and often exceed the goals in all areas by end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs achieve very well but will not all reach the goals by the end of reception. Every opportunity is taken to extend children's English, and imaginative and exciting provision gives children good reasons for talking, safe in the knowledge that staff will listen to them with respect and interest. Adults keep detailed records of the language development of children, and learners at a very early stage of English are supported particularly well by teachers and bilingual staff who are very well trained and skilled. This ensures that the children with the greatest need get the necessary support. Children develop their speaking and listening skills well through pretend and imaginative play; for example, in the pretend post office or the outside play areas, or when going outside to do a traffic survey. Some children are still talking while others talk, rather than talking to others, but many are starting to share their ideas and views with others.
52. The very good teaching and learning are characterised by particularly good levels of understanding of the needs of very young children, high expectations of what they are capable of and well-organised and exciting activities that interest them. For example, in a book-making activity, children looked at toy buses, and talked excitedly about the story of the 'Big Red Bus' before making their own very lively illustrated books. Achievement was very good because the activity was led by a very skilled teacher. Later on another group did the same activity with an equally skilled nursery officer. Both allowed extended discussion and encouraged children to participate by good questioning. Early writing skills were taught very well as part of an interesting and exciting activity. Writing is taught well throughout the school with many examples of children's first writing in displays, letters and post cards and on lists in the pretend post office. Children use computers confidently when playing matching games, and can follow simple stories on the computer or from tapes. The teaching of early reading skills, and the love of books and stories, have high priority. Singing well-known rhymes helps the development of speaking and listening skills and motivates the children to try new words. All children are encouraged to take books home to share with parents who are themselves supported in English classes to help them to help their children. There are good libraries of books for families and carers to use. Bilingual staff are a very good support to the children and their parents and are a major factor in the bilingual children's rapid learning of English, because they can help to interpret for them, find out their needs and encourage them in their learning. This area has improved very well since the last inspection. There is better achievement, better teaching and learning, better provision and more bilingual staff.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good quality of teaching, comprehensive planning for a wide range of interesting activities and careful checking of progress enables children to achieve very well
- Children are likely to achieve the goals for mathematical development by the end of the reception year

### Commentary

53. When children begin at the nursery, many have few mathematical skills. The very good teaching and the provision of a varied range of activities are designed to interest and challenge them. As a result children develop enthusiasm and enjoyment, and achieve well in this important area of learning. Staff organise and plan very effectively, consistently checking children's understanding and knowledge to ensure that they are making the necessary progress. Every opportunity is taken to foster an awareness of numbers and their use. Most children who are four years old, can recognise numerals to ten as they choose a numbered bike in the outdoor play area, or identify magnetic numbers on a board. They learn to count accurately as they use a tally system to record basketball scores, and complete a survey of different vehicles on a busy road as part of a traffic survey. A wide repertoire of number rhymes and songs reinforce their developing understanding of number and size.
54. Mathematical language is used with a purpose and incorporated into the planning. Skilful use of questions and prompts, extends children's understanding of number, size and shape and staff are vigilant in exploiting every situation. Well-situated, laminated prompt cards for questioning are easily visible and staff can refer to them at various points in the nursery. Children identify the tallest tower they have built, know how to make the seat higher when constructing a bus out of large blocks - like the one in the story of 'The Big Red Bus' - and know how to find the first and third in a line of paint printed shapes. Pretend play situations are purposeful. Staff listen carefully to children at such times, respecting their views, consolidating their existing knowledge and understanding, but ensuring that children progress to the next stage of learning. Expectations of children's learning and behaviour are high and children respond appropriately. Staff assess children's progress against clearly defined targets in focused tasks; for example, in baking, staff assess progress in comparing the size and shape of a collection of metal, plastic and wooden spoons. At such times there is clear evidence of children's progress in understanding, across a good range of mathematical concepts and skills. During general tasks, however, when children are often working independently with less supervision, they continue to achieve very well, because the high standard of planning and the provision of suitable resources, challenge them to explore for themselves. For example, in sand and water play, children order two or three objects by capacity, begin to understand ideas about full and empty, and are able to identify, match and name some shapes.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time children leave reception they are likely to reach the goals in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning.
- Very good experiences and activities support children's exploration and investigation skills.

## Commentary

55. Some children enter the nursery with very limited knowledge of this area of learning. Teaching and planning are consistently very good, and as a result, children progress at a much better rate than might be expected. Most children achieve very well and are likely to meet the goals for knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the reception year, some will exceed the goals in their use of computers. A diverse range of appropriate and interesting activities stimulates children's curiosity and promotes their understanding. As a result they develop enthusiasm and enjoyment in these important areas. All children show an interest in computers and many children learn to use the mouse and keyboard as they explore different programs. Some children use the cursor with confidence and understand how to save work. The high level of their achievement is demonstrated by the ability to print out their own work on completion. The school makes very good use of digital cameras. Children are photographed as they work and the large prints are laminated for future use. For example, when building a model bus, photographs were used the next day, for children to recall the experience in sequence and to understand the connection between pictures and words in the book of the 'Big Red Bus'. Children are developing confidence in using digital cameras themselves. They used the cameras with control and assurance during a local walk, they photographed work on a building site and the types of vehicles they observed during a traffic survey. The school gives a high priority to information technology and many future developments are planned.
56. Many opportunities are provided for investigation and discovery; for example, when children use tools to dismantle interesting objects. Learning is well supported by adults as they challenge children's interest in gadgets and how they work. During the inspection, an adult suggested possible ways to trigger the levers of an obsolete mechanical cassette recorder and provided the appropriate language for children to describe their experiences. Children discover the effects of turning a screwdriver in a clockwise and anti-clockwise direction, and checked this against the second hand on a wristwatch. At other times, children investigate the effects of change on liquids and solids, or when they add food colouring to cornflour, or use a spoon or their fingers to compare and contrast the effects of combining two materials. At all times, staff support learning well by using stimulating questions and prompts to help children observe closely and extend their vocabulary. Picture reference books are used well by children to check their investigations and findings.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's physical development is very good and by the end of the reception year they will reach, and some will exceed, the goals for this area of learning.
- A particular strength is the wide range of opportunities for outdoor play, which enables children to acquire very good physical skills.

## Commentary

57. Planning and teaching for a wide and relevant range of physical activities both indoors and outdoors are very good. Children have many and varied opportunities for challenging and purposeful physical development. In most of the indoor activities, children learn how to develop control over a wide range of tools and materials. Some children are able to spread butter with accuracy and precision when making sandwiches at the breakfast club, or to control different types of screwdrivers when dismantling mechanical objects. Children learn



and practise how to use pencils, scissors, paint and glue brushes, and many show increasing control and accuracy, frequently better than might be expected for their age. Many will reach the goals for this area of learning and some are likely to exceed them by the end of the reception year.

58. Very good outdoor play is a strength of the nursery curriculum, and the covered area permits use of the outdoors at all times. A great deal of innovative planning and an extensive and imaginative range of equipment and materials provide many relevant opportunities for children to develop co-ordination and control in their movements. Children enjoy working outdoors and participate enthusiastically in all physical activity. They learn to balance on low and high climbing equipment. The monkey bars present a particular challenge to many children, and their levels of concentration and determination to succeed are often high for this activity. Children enjoy exploring their body's ability to move in different ways. In a focused activity based on the book 'From Head to Toe', they responded to the challenge, 'Can you do it?' moving in the same way as a penguin or an elephant. Children with special needs are encouraged as they learn to steer a wheeled cart and balance their bodies. They also make very good progress because of the high quality of the teaching, which promotes their physical skills and fosters the development of confidence and independence. Careful and regular monitoring and assessment of all children over time indicate the considerable progress made, particularly by those children who have special educational needs. Many children live in cramped accommodation with no outside play areas and the school compensates for this in the very well developed provision for outside play. At the end of each day, staff attend a very effective meeting to review children's participation and progress in activities, and to identify the next stages of learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of children's work are above average in music.
- Staff provide interesting and imaginative experiences for the children.
- Children respond well to the very good teaching and provision, and achieve very well.

### **Commentary**

59. The school gives high priority to the development of children's creative skills in art, music, dance, pretend play, drama, information technology and outdoor play. The use of computers in children's creative learning is well thought out and the school plans to extend the provision further. This area has shown good improvement since the last inspection in the range of experiences offered to the children, the better participation of boys and in children's achievement, which is now very good. There are above average standards in music, and the children show good imagination in using a variety of media. Staff are inventive and teach this area well, always allowing children the time and opportunity to experiment and use their imagination in activities in art and in making things. Teaching overall is good and music teaching is very good. An excellent music lesson was seen during which children learnt to play musical instruments. It focused on loud and quiet sounds and holding and playing the instruments correctly. This good teaching is due to the staff's very good understanding of young children's learning, and also because staff plan stimulating experiences together as a confident team, with a wide range of expertise and lively ideas.
60. Children are able to use painting and modelling materials, scissors and glue with good skill to make a variety of pictures, patterns, prints, and models. They are encouraged to work co-operatively and have developed a wide range of creative skills. They are able to work on their own for quite long periods, painting, using computer programs to draw, paint and print, and in model making. They love to sing and make music and are very well encouraged by the staff.

For example, a group of children worked together on a mathematics activity and sang the number rhyme 'One, Two Three, Four, Five'. The pretend and imaginative play areas are set up to encourage children to think creatively and use their imagination. A pretend 'post office' was very popular and many children enjoyed writing, stamping and posting letters and cards. They were often able to talk about what they had sent. Because of this very good provision and teaching, children are excited and interested and achieve very well. They also learn to share ideas, cooperate with others, make choices and select and use materials. They are encouraged to comment on, and describe, what they are doing and they learn new words. By the time they leave reception they are in line to meet the goals in all aspects of creative development and exceed them in music.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<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	3
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
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	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).*