

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THE BRAMBLES NURSERY SCHOOL AND EARLY  
EXCELLENCE CENTRE**

Southsea

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 115829

Headteacher: Mrs A. Gale

Lead inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 265372

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery with Early Excellence Centre  
School category: Maintained  
Age range of pupils: 3-4  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 44 full time equivalent

School address: Bramble Road  
Southsea  
Hampshire  
Postcode: PO4 0DT

Telephone number: 023 9282 8606  
Fax number: 023 9282 8606

Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs J. Robinson

Date of previous inspection: 3/3/1997

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Brambles Nursery is situated in Southsea, Portsmouth. It was previously inspected in March 1997, and since that time has extended its work in the community with families with young children, and has attained Early Excellence Centre status. It provides part-time nursery schooling for boys and girls from homes in the area and around, from the September following their third birthday until the following July. There are forty-four morning places and the same number each afternoon. Each session is carefully planned to provide equal opportunities for morning and afternoon children. In addition, community provision provides the venue for a range of groups for parents, carers and pre-school babies and toddlers, including *parent and baby*, *parent and toddler*, *stay and play*, *toy library* and *minority ethnic women's support group*, as well as courses designed to meet the specific needs of particular groups of parents and their children. The socio-economic background of the areas surrounding the school includes some deprivation, but children come from a wide range of homes in the Southsea area, which are average overall. The children come from mainly white British backgrounds, but a higher proportion than nationally have English as an additional language. These children come, in the main, from families where Sylheti, Arabic and Albanian are spoken at home. Four children come from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. A slightly higher proportion of the children than nationally have special educational needs. The greater majority of these has speech and language difficulties. Attainment on entry to the school of the current cohort covers the full range, but is below that normally attained, and particularly in communication, language and literacy skills. Currently, the school does not have bi-lingual support for children with English as an additional language, due to difficulties in procedures for appointing a new

member of staff. The school has been awarded Investors in People status and an achievement award and is working as part of the “Healthy Schools” initiative.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16249	Mrs S. M. Barnes	Lead inspector	Communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development, English as an additional language.
1329	Mr K. Oliver	Lay inspector	
27568	Mrs M. Davidson	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL53 7JX

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

The Brambles Nursery and Early Excellence Centre provides a **good** quality of education and good levels of support for the children and families who attend. It is a good school with very good and excellent features. The school is efficiently led and managed and the quality of teaching and learning is good. There are very effective links with parents and the community. As a consequence, the achievements of the children are good overall. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are good.
- Assessment systems are very good and are used well to monitor children's progress.
- Teaching and learning are good and children's achievements are good overall as a result.
- Children of Bangladeshi origin with English as an additional language are currently making satisfactory progress, but it is not as good as their peers.
- Relationships are very good. The very good links with parents and the community benefit children and their families.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
- Arrangements for children and their parents to find out about school and to start nursery are excellent and there are very good arrangements for children to move on to the next stage in their education.
- Opportunities to develop children's spiritual and cultural development, while satisfactory overall, are not always sufficiently explicit in planning and some opportunities are missed.

There has been a good level of improvement overall since the previous inspection of the nursery school. It has responded well to the key issues raised in the last report and has worked hard to resolve them. In addition, it has restructured the curriculum and made great improvements to the accommodation. The very great amount of work it has done to improve the range of services and support it provides for parents of young families and for babies and children in the area has led to it being awarded Early Excellence Centre status. This is the first time the school has been inspected since that award.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

Achievement is **good overall**. Boys and girls of all abilities and most groups make good progress in all six areas of learning for young children. Children start in the nursery with standards which are overall below those normally attained for their age. This is particularly the case in the current year, and in the area of communication, language and literacy skills, standards are overall well below those normally attained. Due to the good teaching they receive, children make good overall gains in their skills and understanding. They are likely to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of their nursery education in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, personal and social development, creative and mathematical areas of learning. Many children will also be on line to attain the goals expected in communication, language and literacy skills, but a significant number in the current cohort will not. Pupils with English as an additional language who speak Sylheti as a first language are supported sensitively by all staff. They make good progress during those sessions in which they have support from a bi-lingual teacher, and satisfactory progress at other times. The school is aware of this through the very good quality of its tracking and

assessment systems and is in the process of appointing extra support for these children to enable them to make the same good gains in their learning as their peers. The provision for children's moral and social development is **good**. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Children have very good attitudes to school and to their work. Behaviour is good and staff all work together well to provide consistent high expectations and a calm polite example for children to emulate. Children like coming to school, attendance is good and children arrive on time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education.

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. All of the teaching is at least satisfactory and the very great majority is at least good. Some of the teaching is very good. Teachers' planning is very good and teachers and support staff make very good use of time. The quality of the work by nursery nurses and other support is very good. All staff work hard to ensure that all children have equal access to all of the activities on offer each day. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the boys and girls all respond well to the activities, showing good levels of concentration and developing the skills to begin to make their own choices. Children with special educational needs are given very good levels of support and, as a result, achieve well. Children with English as an additional language make at least satisfactory and often good gains in their learning. However, there are times when these children do not do as well as they could, due to their lack of confidence in speaking and listening in English. The school has identified this as an area for improvement and is in the process of appointing extra support.

The curriculum is good and is enriched effectively with a good range of extra activities. Provision for children's imaginative development is very good. Procedures to provide a caring and safe environment for all children are good, as is the provision for their guidance and support. The school pays very high regard to helping parents and children who are starting at school to settle in happily and get the most from the opportunities available. Procedures for starting school are excellent for children and their parents and carers. The school's partnership with parents is very good. The extended services the school provides are very good and make a positive contribution to parents' confidence and satisfaction and to their children's achievements. There are very good links with the community and other schools and colleges.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **good**.

The leadership of the head teacher is good. She has a good clear vision of the strengths of the school and high aspirations for raising standards further. Her quiet, determined leadership has led to the development of a good whole team spirit shared by teachers and support staff. The management of the school is good. Development of the services the centre provides for families with young children in the area has been very good. Leadership and management of areas of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage are good. Governance of the school is good. Governors have a good level of awareness of school strengths and areas for improvement. Administrative systems are highly efficient.

## **PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents have very positive views of the school and the work of the centre. Children enjoy school and delight in coming and taking part in the exciting and interesting activities planned for them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**



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

- Go ahead with plans to appoint bi-lingual support for children of Bangladeshi origin with English as an additional language.
- Put greater explicit emphasis on children's spiritual and cultural development in planning and in lessons.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Achievement is **good** overall. Standards are likely to be in line with those expected in most areas by the time children start statutory schooling. However, in communication, language and literacy skills they are likely to be below.

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

- Boys and girls make good overall gains in their learning and good overall progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of their time in the nursery.
- Children with English as an additional language of Bangladeshi origin currently make satisfactory progress overall, but it is not as good as their peers.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children start in the nursery with standards that are overall below those normally attained for their age. Standards in language development were well below those normally attained in the case of the current cohort of children, because higher than average numbers of them have special educational needs in the area of speech and language, and another higher than average proportion speak English as an additional language with low levels of confidence in some situations. Due to the good quality of teaching, most boys and girls make good overall gains in their skills and understanding. Children of all abilities make mostly good progress in all six areas of learning and the majority are likely to attain the goals for nursery children in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, personal, moral and social development and creative development before they transfer to the next stage in their development. However, it is unlikely that standards will be in line with those expected in communication, language and literacy skills, despite children's good progress, due to the particular make up of the current cohort.
2. Children with English as an additional language are provided with bi-lingual support for a small part of each week and, during these times, they make good progress in their learning, and their achievements are good. However, the school readily acknowledges that the lack of this type of support for the greater part of the current year has led to these children making satisfactory progress overall. This has largely been the result of procedural difficulties. Despite the very sensitive teaching from all staff, those children who are at early stages of learning English, particularly those of Bangladeshi origin, do not make as swift progress as some of their peers in those areas of the curriculum which require them to use language to develop and explain their thoughts, such as in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.
3. Children with special educational needs are supported very well and their achievement is good. This is as a result of the very careful assessment and tracking systems, combined with good levels of awareness by all staff of each child's particular needs. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained. This is mainly due to the consistently good quality of leadership and management by the head teacher.

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

Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Attitudes to the school are **very good**. Behaviour is **good**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are very happy to be at Brambles.
- All children feel valued and become confident.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Opportunities for children's spiritual development are not always made explicit.
- Children do not have enough opportunities to appreciate music and art from a variety of cultures.

### **Commentary**

4. Children settle into school quickly and happily, due to the excellent levels of planning and meetings which are arranged. They are keen to be at nursery each day. The extent and variety of activities provided ensure that children are involved and stimulated by all that the nursery has to offer. Inclusion is very good and care is taken to ensure that all children take a full part in the activities on offer. The organisation of each day ensures that children make very good relationships with the adults who teach and support them. They are happy to be with any of these adults, as they know they will be listened to and their answers valued. The good level of staffing and the organisation of the sessions mean that children are often in very small groups and so they have considerable adult attention and they flourish. Children find their activities interesting and absorbing and are able to concentrate for long periods of time, sustained by good questioning. Ample time is given to allow them to complete their tasks and they are not hurried so that they find satisfaction with their work.
5. Behaviour is good. The atmosphere and regular daily routines are well established. There have been no exclusions. Children are polite and learn to be friendly. They address adults by name and show interest in visitors. Most play happily alongside their friends, although some find sharing equipment difficult, but the more mature are beginning to engage with others in discussion over work, for example, discussing which bricks to use for the building, what to take on a family outing to the seaside, or when investigating the contents of the rock pool. There is always someone available to attend to their needs or help out with a difficult situation. Children feel secure and well supported and their personal development is good. They begin to make judgements about the correct behaviour for different places, such as sitting sensibly in story-time or being able to move fast and freely outside. They know how to play correctly with the sand and how to dress appropriately for messy jobs. Provision for moral and social development is good and has a beneficial effect on how well children learn and achieve.
6. Children were thrilled to see pictures of a nursery nurse's new baby and are engaged and transported by powerful story-telling. These are precious and valuable moments. However, possible opportunities for spiritual development are not always indicated in planning and so are sometimes missed. Chances to appreciate a good range of music, beyond singing songs, and opportunities to experience pictures to enrich children's personal development are sometimes missed. In these two areas, provision is satisfactory. Suitable emphasis is placed on preparing children for life in a diverse multi-cultural society.

7. Brambles has good arrangements for ensuring that children come to school. The overwhelming majority of children arrive on time and are ready and eager for whatever the day has in store for them. There are good levels of attendance by parents, guardians and very young children at the many different groups the school runs, although there has been a higher than average incidence of childhood infections, including chicken pox, in the last year.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	16.8	School data:	0.45

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **good** and is enriched by a **good** range of exciting activities. Care and welfare of the children are **good**. There are **very good** links with parents and the community

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment is **good**. The systems the school has are very good and are used well.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is very good.
- Procedures for assessment are very good and records are used well to provide for individual needs.
- All staff are very good at making sure that activities flow on smoothly one after another.
- Nursery nurses and support staff are highly skilled and deployed effectively.
- Children concentrate on activities for good lengths of time.

### Commentary

8. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers' planning is very detailed and effectively based on the careful assessments that all staff make on each child's development and progress in all six areas of learning for Foundation Stage children. The assessment system in the school is very thorough. Teachers and support staff are very skilful in making accurate daily observations of children's progress. These are collated well to form a comprehensive record of achievement for each child and information is transferred in a clear and understandable way for the next teacher. Planning for group teaching sessions is generated from these records, as teachers can easily identify the areas where each child needs support and focus, and what the next stage in their learning needs to be. This system works well to enable special topics to be taught to those children who have been identified as gifted and talented, for example. These extensive records also provide dated and effective information to monitor how well

children with special educational needs progress towards their targets. However, the evaluation of daily activities does not always provide sufficient information for monitoring the coverage of the curriculum. Thus, the use of assessment data is good.

9. Staff plan thoughtfully and imaginatively to give children good levels of challenge and exciting and interesting ways to reinforce what they know and develop their learning further. For example, they set up large role play areas, such as a pretend beach where children can practise and develop other skills, such as developing their vocabulary and learning about the world in an enjoyable way.
10. All staff make very good use of time. Routines are established and reinforced so that little time is lost and children progress from one worthwhile activity to another in a seamless manner. This establishment of good routines and systems allows children to develop good levels of independence in planning which of the activities that their teachers have set up for them they will take part in, as they generally know what will happen next.
11. The quality of the work by nursery nurses and other support is very good. They are highly trained and knowledgeable and take a full active part in teaching and assessment. All staff work hard to try to ensure that all children have equal access to all of the activities on offer each day. Careful and tactful intervention encourages children to try out all of the activities on offer at some point, although staff are also very good at giving each child space and time to explore an activity fully and become totally absorbed in what they are doing. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the boys and girls all respond well to the activities, showing good levels of concentration and developing the skills to work well independently. Children with special educational needs are given very good levels of support and, as a result, achieve well. Children with English as an additional language make at least satisfactory and often good gains in their learning. However, there are times when children of Bangladeshi origin do not do as well as they could, due to their lack of confidence in speaking and listening in English. The school has identified this as an area for improvement and is in the process of appointing extra support.
12. Teaching and support for families in the extended services, which the school provides, are good. All staff plan carefully to give small children, their parents and guardians good opportunities to try out many of the activities of the nursery. For example, toddlers have a chance to experiment with paint, mixing colours, printing their own patterns, working with the computer or playing with construction toys with the security of their parent or guardian on hand to offer encouragement and praise. On other occasions, a library service gives parents a chance to help their children at home. The young children clearly benefit greatly from these opportunities, which prepare them well for nursery education.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	12	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 is **good**. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a successful play-based curriculum and the garden is used very well to include all areas of learning.

- Children are able to choose from a good range of interesting activities.
- Some areas of the curriculum are visited less regularly.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
- Children are prepared very well for the next stage of learning.
- The accommodation, resources and match of teachers are good and are used effectively for teaching and community provision.
- Support staff are very knowledgeable and deployed effectively.

## Commentary

13. The school has succeeded in providing a lively and interesting curriculum, based on play for the children in the nursery. The planning for activities is extensive and complex. Each adult has the responsibility for a selection of activities to be developed during the week, as well as teaching or supporting small groups. Time-tabling is effective and there is a good balance between child selected activities and adult led teaching. Most activities link to a theme, which, during the inspection, was *At the Seaside*. Learning was made relevant through creative play *At the Beach*, making a *Beach in a Box*, investigating seaweed and fish in the water and examining shells for drawing. The garden area is an important part of everyone's day. It is well used in rain, wind and sunshine for all aspects of the curriculum. The good provision of bright waterproof boots and coats, easily accessible to children, enhances opportunities for its use. As well as very good opportunities for physical development, it provides chances to watch plants grow, engage in creative play and learn to care for the environment. All adults prepare resources very well for these activities. This occasionally means that children have limited chances to select materials and equipment for themselves. Children have very good opportunities to make choices of what they do, but do not often have the chance to really make decisions about which activities will be available.
14. Some aspects of the six areas of learning are less well represented in planning. For example, there are limited opportunities for children to listen to a variety of music in different styles or to look at and appreciate art from a wide range of historical or cultural perspectives. Although musical instruments are used during the year, more regular opportunities to experiment with or play percussion instruments on a daily basis are limited. Incidental opportunities for creating moments of wonder and reflection are used well, but opportunities for these are not identified in planning. Assessment records indicate that the development of a sense of time has not been identified regularly this year. Stories are used well and dual language books are easily available. All staff place good emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
15. Children with special educational needs are very well supported. The high quality of assessment procedures ensures that effective records of progress are kept. Children benefit significantly from the presence of a speech and language therapist as part of the school personnel. Exercises established with her are practised well throughout the week and children are particularly sensitively supported in this area. There is very good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator and therapist and all children with special educational needs make good progress during their year in nursery. Great care is taken to provide support for families in their choice of school and staff work hard to ensure that suitable placements are found for all children.
16. The accommodation is good. There has been a radical change to the building since the previous inspection and the teaching areas and garden have been developed and

enhanced. The most significant change is in the development for secure, separate facilities for community provision. These are accessible to non-ambulant parents, carers and children and have enabled the school to support families with young children in the area very effectively, in a range of different ways. Great care is taken throughout the school to provide a bright, clean and attractive setting for all activities. However, teachers do not always display children's work in such a way as to create the best impact or to encourage children to notice current activities. Resources are good and are used well. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum and the match of highly skilled and dedicated support staff is very good and has a very beneficial effect on teaching and learning.

## Care, guidance and support

The nursery has **good** arrangements for attending to children's care, welfare and health and safety. Its monitoring of children's achievements and personal development is **good**. There are **good** arrangements for involving children through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements for preparing children and their families for the start of their time at Brambles are excellent.
- The school cares for its children well and ensures that they live and learn in a safe and healthy community.
- Children are treated as individuals. Their learning and personal needs are closely monitored and planned for.

## Commentary

17. Brambles' health and safety arrangements are good. Child protection procedures are good. There are regular safety and security inspections of the whole site. Basic risk assessment procedures are in place. There are fully trained first aiders on site. Children are well supervised throughout their time in the nursery.
18. Everyone is sensitive to the children's needs and provides them with good support and guidance. The arrangements for tracking progress and personal development are very good. They are used effectively to enable teachers to identify needs and plan what should be done next in order to help children of all abilities and from all groups make the best possible use of their time in nursery. Children's personal development is monitored carefully.
19. Brambles listens to children and values their ideas and the contributions which they can make to nursery life. With parents' help, it carries out regular surveys of children's ideas and opinions and uses the findings well in planning and the day-to-day running of the school.

## Example of outstanding practice

### **The arrangements for children to start their nursery placement are excellent.**

Care and concern for children and their families' needs are at the heart of Brambles' excellent approach to bringing new children into nursery. In the summer, parents and children who have accepted places for September come in for a lively, scene-setting family evening. They explore the nursery, try things out, talk to staff about their worries and concerns and generally find out what goes on during a typical Brambles' day.

Later on, there are two more visits to school which put minds at rest and emphasise that Brambles is an "open door" establishment. Multi-lingual information packs, clear and well written "Read with Me" and "Maths is Everywhere" booklets help parents to prepare their children and discover how they can help them learn. Sensitive and supportive home visits ensure that staff are well aware of families' circumstances, cultures, interests and any particular issues which they will need to take into account.

The warm, welcoming daily routines are established on the very first day. Apprehension gives way to relief as everyone greets the new arrivals with smiles, kindness, warmth and care. Well-known staff from parents and toddler, and stay and play groups are on hand to provide a reassuring welcome. A few weeks later, there is a wine and cheese party for parents, staff and governors. Everyone gets to know each other and celebrates the start of the children's school life. All parents think that this is a great idea which sums up the excellent approach to preparing their children for school life.

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

The nursery's links with parents, other schools, colleges and the local community are **very good**. Extended school services and educational and support services for parents, families, and members of the community are **very effective**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strong partnership between Brambles and parents has a significant effect on children's learning and development.
- Parents receive a very good, wide range of information about their children's work and progress.
- There are very few regular parent volunteer helpers in and around the nursery.
- Children benefit from close links with local schools and colleges and the wider educational community.
- Brambles makes a major contribution to the local community.

### **Commentary**

20. Parents are delighted with the way in which Brambles cares for their children, helps them to learn and prepares them for the rest of their school days. They love the nursery's family atmosphere and the warm welcome they get whenever they come in to school or the community support groups.
21. A wide range of high quality, multi-lingual brochures and newsletters keeps parents in touch with what is going on. The beginning and the end of each session are informal opportunities for catching up with staff and "open Mondays" enable parents to stay with their children for a whole session. The spring term's "open fortnight" is a more formal time when parents can come into the nursery to discuss their children's progress. Records of achievement, which are sent home at the end of the year, are comprehensive, informative and personal to each child.
22. The school clearly values parents' contributions to nursery life but there are no regular parent volunteer helpers. However, there is no shortage of help for one-off events such as the Eid and Christmas parties. Parents' views and ideas are collected through, for example, regular questionnaires, as well as informal discussions and are acted upon. Parents and staff work together to raise funds for improvements and charities, such as *Childline*.
23. More than 200 families per month benefit from Brambles' role as an Early Excellence Centre. The community rooms are used for a range of very popular mother and baby, mother and toddler and pre-school support groups. There are *Keeping up with Children* sessions for nursery parents and courses, run by the local college, which are linked to qualifications. The nursery works very closely with Portsmouth's ethnic-minority and refugee centres. It responds sensitively to the needs of these groups, providing translators, English lessons, parenting classes, get-togethers and counselling support in a secure and supportive environment. A full-time bi-lingual support worker has recently been appointed.



24. Trainee teachers, nursery workers, researchers and visitors from other nurseries and education authorities are a feature of life at Brambles. They come to learn from the Brambles' approach to running a nursery. School staff go out into the wider nursery community to talk about their ideas and experiences.
25. The arrangements for ensuring that children make smooth and happy transfers to their primary schools are very good. There are visits from new teachers and to new schools and children and parents are helped to grow away?

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**. The head teacher provides **good** leadership. Leadership by other key staff in the school as a whole is also good. Management is **good**. The governance of the school is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The head teacher, strongly supported by the senior teacher, has been very effective in leading the school in the development of community provision.
- The head teacher is clearly and accurately aware of standards in all aspects of school provision.
- Induction procedures for new staff and newly qualified teachers are good and the school plays a strong role in initial teacher training.
- Governors fulfil the role of 'critical friend' well and have a very positive role in ensuring the school makes the most of the money it has.
- Leadership and management of provision for children with special educational needs are very good.

### **Commentary**

26. The head teacher, strongly supported by all staff, has been effective in creating a positive climate within the school, giving a clear educational direction and maintaining the confidence of parents. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a wide range of support systems for families with young children and child care workers who live locally. In recognition of this work, it has been designated as an Early Excellence Centre. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in their questionnaire responses were highly supportive of the leadership and management of the school and the work it does, both for their children and for the wider community. The school's vision and aims are clearly known and understood and there is a strong sense of teamwork. All teachers know the school's priorities and are fully committed to them as a result of their good involvement in deciding the school's action plan. This improvement plan is good and is used effectively for school development. It has been used well for setting budget allocations to support the school's priorities, actions and staff training.
27. Nursery nurses and support staff receive clear information from the senior management team and, when possible, attend staff meetings to be kept aware of actions the school is taking. Teachers adopt a collegiate approach to the leadership of most areas of the curriculum. All staff show good, mutual support, work hard and demonstrate good teamwork. There has been enhanced focus on setting up effective systems to track children's achievement to ensure that work is matched to abilities, including the more able, those with special educational needs and children with English as an additional language from various ethnic backgrounds. This is now being used effectively to raise standards still further and has enabled the school to see that the decision to appoint bi-lingual support staff is vitally important.

28. Governors are committed and very supportive of the school. They are fully involved in helping to shape the school's vision and direction and fulfil their statutory duties well. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in school, particularly supported by the clear and effective information provided by the head teacher, and senior management team. Governors are aware of what is needed to enable the school to develop further, particularly in their role in strategic planning. Financial management is good and the school takes care to apply the principles of *best value* to spending decisions. It makes best strategic use of resources, including grants and additional funding to work towards the educational priorities it has identified through careful self-evaluation and analysis of performance.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	342,543	Balance from previous year	9,800
Total expenditure	332,216	Balance carried forward to the next	20,127
Expenditure per child	*		

\*It is not possible to accurately calculate the amount spent per child on roll, as school funding covers a wide range of other supporting services for the community.

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

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

Provision for children who attend the nursery is good and provides a good base for them to start to become effective and confident learners. The curriculum is good and includes a good range of opportunities for enrichment, such as visiting farm animals and hatching moths and butterflies.

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

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

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

- Children are happy and settle into school well.
- Very good relationships help children to make good progress.
- Teachers value all children's responses and the atmosphere in school encourages high self-esteem.
- Children have good opportunities to make choices.
- Children do not have sufficient opportunities to lead new developments in their activities.

#### **Commentary**

29. Children achieve well, due to good teaching and learning. The majority are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals at the beginning of statutory schooling. The nursery provides for many the first experiences of being away from family or carer in a social setting. This is managed exceptionally well through a series of well structured meetings and builds very well upon the amenities provided for families within the community provision of the school. Friends from play and stay sessions, and mother and toddler groups are present in nursery to welcome new children. As a result, children settle into nursery quickly and are very happy. The caring environment of the school and the good number of staff ensure that there is always someone available to help and support. Adults get to know children very well and the relationships formed are very good.
30. All adults value and respond to children's conversation and requests with sensitivity. As a result, children feel important and their self-esteem is secured. In return, their learning is good, they learn to trust those who look after them and treat them politely and address them by name. Teachers use questioning well to extend children's understanding and experiences. They prepare activities thoroughly and children have very good opportunities to make a choice of what they do. Since all resources are provided, there are few occasions when children are able to select materials or tools totally independently. Although children choose well from a very good selection of interesting activities, fewer opportunities were observed where children actually led the development of their own activities or were consulted about what they thought should happen next. Very good quality observation contributes to effective assessment in this area of learning.
31. There are very good routines which are consistently maintained so that children become confident, know exactly what they should be doing and learn how to behave appropriately. For example, they know that the garden will be open at a certain time and do not ask before hand. They know how to behave in the hall with a large number of people and they know how to make a train to ensure that their group gets to the right place safely. These

regular routines enable them to gain independence. They select coats and rainwear for outside as well as deciding whether they need an apron to work with water. This aspect of personal development pervades all of nursery life and contributes significantly to the quality of children's social and moral development.

32. There is a collegiate approach to the leadership of this area of learning and teachers plan together effectively to include it in all activity areas. The good quality of verbal communication between staff ensures that adults know their children very well and can respond effectively to social needs. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, especially in the quality of procedures for starting the nursery.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given good opportunities to develop language skills across the curriculum.
- The school has developed very good assessment systems to track children's progress and teachers use these well.
- Children enjoy drawing pictures to illustrate well-known stories, and dictate descriptions for their teachers to write, to make books for the rest of the class.
- Children with English as an additional language make good progress when supported by specialist staff.
- By the end of the year, very few children can continue a rhyming string of words or form many recognisable letters in their writing?

### **Commentary**

33. The quality of leadership and management of this aspect of learning is good. As a result, all staff are aware of the vital importance of developing language skills for young children. Great care is taken when planning all activities to ensure that good opportunities are built in for developing children's vocabulary and confidence in speaking. They are given many practical examples to enable them to learn the importance of reading and writing in everyday life. The school is aware of the importance of developing children's skills by building on what they already know and all staff take good care to model good use of language and to value the children's contributions to discussions.
34. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and many exciting ways are planned for children to learn about the various aspects of language. For example, they make their own books on topics that they find interesting and that they have good experience of, such as visiting the beach. Following a discussion on the different activities they had enjoyed at the sea side, one group of children drew a picture and then either wrote about it in their own way or dictated to the teacher what she could write for them. The teacher took great care to elicit a response from each child, which was linked to their own knowledge and experience and important and memorable to them. Good use is made of a range of resources and approaches, so that each child can learn in the way most suited to his or her needs.
35. Language is developed well as children take part in imaginative play, cooking and cleaning, for example, making soup, Delicious! Smell it! Yummy! They discuss what they will need to take with them when planning imaginary activities, such as a picnic by the

sea. Some children become so engrossed in these activities that they believe in them totally, asserting to parents and carers that they have indeed visited the seaside when they are collected at the end of the morning or afternoon session. By the time children leave nursery, most are starting to use a wide vocabulary, reflecting the wide range of activities and opportunities with which staff provide them. A few children are in line to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they start their statutory education, but many others are not. Most children recognise letters from their own name, but fewer are confident to form letters correctly. Analysis of the very accurate and detailed assessment indicates that few children are confident to continue a string of rhyming words, for example.

36. Children with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress in line with their peers. Children with English as an additional language make good progress when supported by a bi-lingual specialist. However, the school has identified that children whose first language is Sylheti are currently only making satisfactory progress overall, as they only have access to this support for a tenth of the week and their lack of confidence results in them doing less well than other children. The school has tried to appoint a staff member to resolve this, but unfortunately this process has not been as swift as had been expected. Overall, the good levels of progress noted by the previous inspection have been maintained.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan to provide good opportunities for children to use mathematical skills in other areas of learning.
- Record keeping is accurate and detailed.
- Children make good progress in learning about patterns.

### **Commentary**

37. The leadership and management of this area of the curriculum are good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and the nursery nurses have a good knowledge of the needs of young children and provide a good, wide range of opportunities for the children to use number and mathematical vocabulary in an exciting way. The activities are interesting and the children are encouraged to count, match and estimate while playing and working at a whole range of different activities throughout the day. These regular, enjoyable opportunities lead to the children developing confidence in their mathematical skills.
38. Record keeping is very detailed and accurate and is used well by teachers when planning the next activity for children to undertake, so that it builds upon what they already know and extends their knowledge still further. Children are likely to attain the standards expected of them by the time they start their statutory education and their achievement is good.
39. Children match, sort and create repeated patterns well with small apparatus and are starting to use mathematical language appropriately to correctly describe position and size, for example, when measuring an extremely long piece of sea-weed in the water tray. They join in with a suitable range of number and counting activities. Some higher

attaining children count objects to ten and are beginning to recognise the written numbers. However, few of the children are formally recording number work in written form by the time they move on to the next stage in their education. Most children include number as a natural part of their play, timing the cooking of a pretend pizza, for example, 'It will be eight minutes! I'm ready three minutes!' (while showing three fingers) They are developing vocabulary related to size and use terms such as 'big' and 'little' correctly. The standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good questioning helps children to achieve well.
- Children learn very well about the natural world.
- Children become skilful in making things.
- Children use many different pieces of equipment to learn effectively about information and communication technology.

## Commentary

40. Children achieve well overall in this area of learning. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Children make generally good progress during the year that they are in the nursery and most are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they start statutory education. Children who have English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress in those areas where discussion is an integral part of understanding, due to their lack of skills and confidence in speaking and listening. Teachers work hard to encourage and support these children, and specialist learning assistants also provide good guidance.
41. Teaching is good overall for this area of learning. Most children learn well through the good range of interesting and exciting activities organised for them. When children learn about the natural world, the particularly well-chosen activities and very good teaching in this aspect result in very good learning for most children. Children are encouraged to use their senses well to investigate new experiences, and teachers use particularly good questioning to help children examine seaside objects, such as seaweed and shells. They have had good experiences of planting seeds and caring for the growth of plants. They find frogs and moths in the hall display area and learn effectively about farm animals after a visit to the school when they could, smell, see, hear and, sometimes touch the real thing!
42. Children have extensive opportunities to plan and build with a variety of construction toys, and learn to stick, cut and join materials effectively. These activities link well to the current theme which makes learning relevant and successful. Blue glue is good for making the sea, and tape, sand and shells help to create a *Beach in a Box*. Children become skilful in this area and are pleased with the results of their efforts.
43. Computers are available in each teaching area and children have experience of a good range of software. Most are efficient in the use of the mouse to select buttons and pictures. Particularly good use is made of technological equipment, other than computers. Metal detectors are fun to use in the sand! The digital camera is used extensively to record activities and some of the children are learning to use this effectively themselves. A cassette player is always available for songs and stories.
44. Whilst being involved in the *By the Seaside* topic, children have been able to look at photographs of their own town and write post-cards from Portsmouth. They talk about the weather, especially outside on a windy day! They have satisfactory opportunities during the year to develop a sense of place. Teachers review this area of learning together and manage it well. However, monitoring of experiences through assessment records indicates that there have been fewer opportunities to investigate a sense of time this year.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn how to run, jump and swing well.
- Children do not have a sufficient number of opportunities to learn how to move to music.

- Informative records are kept of children's drawings which tracks the progress they make well.

### **Commentary**

45. Teaching is good in this area of learning and, as a result, children achieve well. The majority are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals at the start of statutory schooling. Leadership and management are good. The good use of the garden is significant factor in the competence children gain with large body movements. They have plenty of opportunities to ride wheeled toys and most can pedal effectively. They can climb, swing and slide on the permanent equipment and begin to learn to co-operate with each other. They learn satisfactorily to use bats and balls and a few enjoy a game of football with varying degrees of success. Children appreciate the freedom and fresh air. They show great enjoyment and become confident about their bodies. Although children are daily involved in singing action songs, inside, there are fewer opportunities for them to move to music freely in order to become confident in interpreting ideas and feelings.
46. Inside and outside, children learn how to handle brushes, using different sizes successfully for different effects. They learn how to hold pencils and crayons satisfactorily to create drawings. Usually, these activities relate directly to the current themes. For example, children were able to examine and draw shells, and cut and paste pictures of items for their sea-side suit-case. Very good use is made of collections of children's pictures to provide a good assessment record of how their skills have developed. There are many opportunities provided for children to learn how to use a variety of tools when involved with modelling and making patterns. Their manipulation of small objects becomes satisfactorily confident.
47. Teachers plan together for both the structure of the timetable in this area and its development. At present, the organisation and staffing of the garden area is under review to make it consistent with the other activity areas. This indicates a realistic approach to curriculum development. The standards noted by the previous inspection have been maintained effectively.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given very good opportunities for developing their imagination and for role play.
- Some opportunities are missed for children to initiate music making activities and to respond to music.
- There are good links to the development of language.
- Accurate and detailed record keeping helps staff keep track of what each child can do and what each has experienced.
- Children have regular opportunities to use a wide variety of media to express themselves, but they have limited opportunities to look at and emulate art styles, sculpture and fabric design from a range of different genre.

### **Commentary**



48. This aspect of learning is well led and managed and the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Children are provided with very good, daily, exciting opportunities to take part in role play and to use their imagination. For example, during the inspection, the whole of the hall area was transformed into a *sea-side* with *water, sand, rock pools* and other opportunities to play imaginatively. This makes a positive contribution to children's development of language skills and all staff use these times well to develop children's vocabulary further. For example, one small group patiently explained to their teacher, *'We are playing mums and darlings!'* and what that involved. Creative play is used effectively by staff to ensure that health and safety issues are covered, emphasising, for example, the need to apply *sun-cream* before venturing out. Children enter into these experiences whole-heartedly, putting on swim wear and jumping up and down with blue cloth, *splashing* and giggling in pretend waves. Children have very good opportunities for entering very deep levels of involvement in the experience. For example, one small boy became completely engrossed and enacted over and over again *making and eating a picnic and taking photographs*.
49. Children have good daily opportunities to sing when the whole school meets together. Due to the large size and range of abilities of this group, it is not always possible for every child to get as much from the experience musically as he or she might, although it does make a very positive contribution to their awareness of being part of a whole school. From planning, it can be seen that regular opportunities are also provided for children to play instruments and make music. Opportunities for them to create their own music spontaneously, to listen regularly to a range of musical styles, or to respond to music in movement and dance, while satisfactory, are more limited. All staff plan together very well to give children a wide range of artistic and creative experiences, using a wide variety of media. However, there are very few examples of adult initiated art, textile work or sculpture around the school for children to look at or emulate and so the contribution that this aspect of learning makes to their cultural development is satisfactory overall. The good levels of progress children make and their good levels of achievement indicate an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be making satisfactory progress overall.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Children's achievement	3
<b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well children learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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