

INSPECTION REPORT

ARLESEY NURSERY SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE CENTRE

Arlesey

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109424

Headteacher: Mrs A.Saunders

Lead inspector: Mrs A.Pangbourne

Dates of inspection: 4th- 5th October 2004

Inspection number: 266317

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:	73
School address:	High Street Arlesey Bedfordshire
Postcode:	SG15 6SL
Telephone number:	01462 732168
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. Lyon
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre draws most of its children from the local area, although some children with special educational needs (SEN) come from neighbouring villages. A Childcare Centre runs alongside the Nursery and provides a breakfast group, an afternoon session, an after-school group and a holiday club. It is open to 3-9 year olds. The socio-economic circumstances of most children are below average. Their attainments on entry range from high to very low but are generally below those normally found for three-year-olds, particularly in language development. At the time of the inspection, there were 73 children on roll, with 36 attending part time in the mornings, 19 attending part time in the afternoons and 18 attending full time. There were few children from ethnic minority heritages and none speak English as an additional language. There were 12 children with SEN, ranging from autism to speech and language delay. Two pupils had a Statement of SEN, which is a high proportion. The school received an achievement award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23818	Alison Pangbourne	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage
14756	John Lovell	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** Nursery School and it gives very good value for money. Most children enter the Nursery with standards that are below those usually found for three-year-olds, but cover the full range of attainment. Language development is particularly poorly developed for many children. By the time they leave, at the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday, most have already reached the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. Consequently, standards are above the expected levels for children of their age in all the areas of learning, except communication, language and literacy where they are similar to the expected levels. This represents very good achievement for all children. The quality of teaching is very good. The school is very well led and managed and the headteacher provides excellent leadership.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve very well because staff use very good assessment procedures to pinpoint individual needs and to provide very well matched activities.
- The excellent use of support staff and resources contributes very positively to the standards attained.
- The very good curriculum provides many opportunities for children to develop their independence skills and to choose their own resources.
- The way in which all adults help children to understand how well they are doing is excellent.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and, as a result, they show very good attitudes to their activities, behave very well and make excellent relationships.
- Very good provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) means that they achieve very well.

Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The Nursery is even more effective now than it was then. There were no key issues to be addressed but it has moved forward considerably. There have been improvements to the quality of teaching, children's personal qualities are better and much has been done to enhance the curriculum. Standards have risen and achievement has improved. The Nursery has set up a Childcare Centre since the previous inspection, and although this was not a focus for this inspection, it contributes significantly to the partnership with parents and the community, as well as to the care it provides for the children.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good. Although many children enter Nursery with underdeveloped skills, most are ahead of what is expected for five-year-olds by the time they leave Nursery in all the areas of learning, except communication, language and literacy, where they do as well as most children of their age. They do not do quite as well in this area of learning because many start school with such poorly developed language skills. The strong emphasis placed on the

development of these skills means that children achieve very well in this area. Children with SEN and higher attaining children also achieve very well.

Children's personal qualities are **very good** overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Relationships are excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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

Teaching and learning are **very good** throughout the Nursery. In the best sessions, excellent use of resources and very high expectations encourage children to work very hard and to do their best. Very effective methods mean that children learn to work both independently and in small groups. The excellent use of talented Nursery nurses and teaching assistants as equal members of the team means that all children receive a very high quality of education regardless of which adult they are working with. As a result, all children learn very well. Very good assessment procedures include individual folders that are accessible to children and parents. The thoroughness with which the folders are regularly updated means that all adults know exactly what each child needs to learn next and, because they are shared with them, the children have a very good understanding of how they have improved.

The curriculum is very good with a very rich variety of exciting activities both indoors and outdoors. It is very carefully planned to provide ample opportunities for adult-led and child-initiated activities. It is very well enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors. The Nursery provides well for children's pastoral needs and the way in which it helps them to understand how they are getting on is exceptional. There are very good links with parents and the community. Links with the adjacent lower school, to which most pupils transfer, are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has a very clear vision for the continual development of the school and leads by example as a key member of the teaching team. She has very successfully initiated new developments in the way that the curriculum is organised. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and teacher, who provide very good leadership. The very close teamwork, with the shared commitment to high standards, contributes very positively to the high quality of teaching seen during the inspection. The teaching staff share responsibility for the areas of learning and have a very good understanding of areas for development. Several governors have been appointed recently and they fulfil their roles well. Statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the work of the Nursery. They particularly like the ethos, where every child is valued. They like the exciting activities that are offered and that their children are encouraged to find out for themselves. They think the school is well led and managed and that the teaching is good. The inspection team agrees with their positive views.

Children spoken to like coming to Nursery. They like their friends and finding things out. They left their parents and carers very willingly at the start of sessions, often rushing in to get started!

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In the context of the school's many strengths, there are no significant areas for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception year. It is based on six areas of learning and children work towards early learning goals in each area. Standards are usually measured at the end of the Foundation Stage. Most children leave the Nursery before this time and so judgements in this report are based on how far the children have progressed towards the goals expected at the end of the Foundation Stage, when compared to other children of the same age.

Achievement is a measure of how well children are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Achievement is very good overall. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls. Most children are doing better than expected for their age in all the areas of learning, with the exception of communication, language and literacy, where they do as well as most children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children with SEN achieve very well.
- Children do very well in communication, language and literacy because staff take every opportunity to compensate for their underdeveloped skills in this area when they enter Nursery.

Commentary

1. Most children enter the Nursery with standards that are below those of typical three-year-olds, but cover the full range of attainment. Language is poorly developed for many children. Inspection evidence supports this judgement and the Nursery's own data from their assessments on entry confirm this. Comprehensive records are maintained and show that most children have already reached the goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage in most of the areas of learning by the time they leave Nursery in the term after their fifth birthday. The Nursery also has data to show the standards reached by the end of the Foundation Stage in the lower school because the headteacher was also acting headteacher there last term. This shows that, last year, most children exceeded the early learning goals in all the areas of learning, with the exception of communication, language and literacy where they met them. Children currently in the Nursery are on course to reach similar standards.
2. Individual programmes of work are very well organised by teachers for children with SEN and children are supported sensitively by learning support assistants where necessary. A very good balance is maintained between short sessions of individual or group teaching and the opportunity for children to participate as a full member of the Nursery.

3. There are several reasons why all children do so well. The quality of teaching is very good and the strong emphasis on the development of language skills across all areas of the curriculum helps to compensate for children's low skills on entry. Very good assessment procedures mean that the needs of individuals are very well met and because all adults know the children very well, any areas of difficulty are swiftly identified and addressed. The daily review of each session also ensures that tasks are closely matched to children's needs. The very good curriculum, which encourages independent learning, is another factor leading to very good achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is good and punctuality is very good. Attitudes to the school and behaviour are very good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very happy to be at the Nursery.
- All children feel valued and flourish and they make excellent relationships.
- Children learn how to behave very well and the atmosphere in the Nursery is industrious and purposeful.

Commentary

4. Each session begins enthusiastically. Children are excited to come into the Nursery and are keen to see what interesting activities are available to them every day. They are greeted by name and made to feel welcome. Although each adult is responsible for a small group of children, all children establish excellent relationships with all of those who help them. They know that they are valued and that their voice will be heard. There is always someone nearby to throw a ball, talk about a jigsaw, share a game or sit close by in story time. In teaching groups particularly, children's suggestions and answers are used effectively to encourage learning. For example, while experimenting with shapes and objects to make patterns and shadows, children led the discussion and were given many opportunities to choose and arrange their own materials. This is one of the most effective governing principles of the Nursery. Even though some activities are in place, the materials and equipment are well laid out and children have real choices as to what they do. This encourages their independence and feeling of self-worth.
5. Routines are well established and children quickly learn how to sit and listen attentively to stories, collect their coats or find their name cards. Time is always allowed for children to finish what they are doing and many children show that they can concentrate for long periods of time. No-one is ever turned away from activities and if there is no space you can always leave your name on the list for later! There is great delight in the resources used. Collections of miniature 'nice things' make counting fun and beautiful natural materials are a joy to use in the sand and on the light box. The very good levels of staffing ensure that everyone is engaged in activities and all adults are very good at identifying times when their presence is required. There was one fixed term exclusions last year.
6. Even at the start of the autumn term children are able to make suitable choices, persist at a task and remember what happens next. The quality of the personal, social and emotional development curriculum contributes significantly to the very high levels of moral and social development shown by the children. This reflects accurately the ethos of the Nursery. It is a place where parents feel it a privilege for their children to attend. Extensive use of observation of the natural world and the exemplary use of resources, combined with the magic of story-telling and the freedom to make choices, contributes in great measure to the good level of spiritual development.
7. Attendance is not compulsory for children under five, but the good levels of attendance found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The Nursery is currently recording attendance levels of about 95 per cent. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are good. Children are enthusiastic to attend Nursery and parents ensure that

the Nursery is notified promptly of any absences. Punctuality is very good and there are well established routines at the start of sessions, which are understood by parents and children. The good levels of attendance have a positive effect on children's progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Very good teaching enables all children to make very good gains in their learning. The very good curriculum is enriched very well by a wide range of visits and visitors. Children are well cared for and the support they receive is excellent. Links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment of children's work is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent use of resources and support staff contributes positively to the standards attained.
- Very high expectations and the very effective use of questions mean that children make very good gains in their learning.
- Very good assessment procedures ensure that tasks are very well matched to the needs of all children.
- Staff manage children very well and, as a result, children work very successfully independently and collaboratively.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	5	0	0	0	0

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

8. The very successful deployment of talented support staff contributes very positively to the children's education. They play a full part in teaching groups of children and are valued members of the team. Several examples of very good teaching were seen in sessions led by them during the inspection. For example, a Nursery nurse taught children the specific skills needed for using tools, adapting her questions very well according to the age and needs of the children. In another session, a Nursery nurse helped children to develop their manipulative skills in completing jigsaws, continually asking questions and giving support such as 'Can I suggest something?', so encouraging the child but without giving him the solution.
9. A very positive feature of the teaching is the way that children are expected to take responsibility for their own resources. Attractive and stimulating resources are readily available for each activity and the children are expected to choose appropriately. For example, baskets of natural materials were arranged near the sand tray but the children were expected to choose what they needed. They were expected to fetch a chair if they needed one. A dish of interesting fruits and vegetables provided many opportunities for learning across the curriculum. Children were taught to use a knife and fork to cut the

fruits, learned to name a pomegranate and cauliflower and also investigated their smell. This outstanding use of resources to stimulate learning contributes positively to the standards attained.

10. Adults take every opportunity to compensate for the underdeveloped language skills shown by many children. They use questions very effectively and talk to the children when working alongside them. For example, whilst helping children with jigsaws, a Nursery nurse helped a child develop his mathematical skills by asking 'Which is the next biggest butterfly?' and then, while looking at an animal, 'Can you find his ears?'
11. Children know that they are expected to behave very well and they meet this expectation. This means that they are trusted to play sensibly together and this contributes to the harmonious ethos. When using wheeled toys outside, for example, they share them and take care not to bump into each other. When they come into Nursery at the start of sessions, they choose an activity independently and work very well together. No examples were seen where adults had to intervene to manage misbehaviour.
12. The Nursery has worked hard to develop very effective assessment procedures and these are pivotal to the way that children do so well. Each child has a 'Special Folder' which contains observational notes, samples of work and records relating to progress towards the early learning goals. The children have access to these and so they are able to see how they have improved. They are also shared with parents, who greatly appreciate them. Adults keep observational notes on stickers each day and these are transferred to the folders to give an up-to-date view of each child's needs. Each day, staff review the sessions and identify what children need to learn next. As a result, tasks are very closely matched to the needs of each child as staff know the children very well. This means that all children, including those with SEN, are enabled to achieve very well.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children with SEN is very good.
- The school provides a very successful play-based curriculum.
- The high quality and use of resources ensure that activities are interesting and stimulating.
- All children benefit from very well planned visits and visitors to school.
- Great care is taken to ensure that children are prepared very effectively for the next school.

Commentary

13. This is an inclusive Nursery school. The staff are successful in providing for all children's needs so those with SEN achieve very well. Very good liaison is maintained between outside agencies which also support children well. Records are kept efficiently and progress is monitored very closely. Careful and early assessment ensures that no time is wasted identifying needs and securing all available help and advice for these children.

14. Children enjoy what they are doing in the Nursery. A particularly good balance is maintained between the activities which the children choose for themselves and those which are carried out with adults. Very good assessment methods ensure that all adults know what children can do and thus small-group activities can be adapted effectively to suit their needs. It is exciting to count with tiny special objects or to find out about capacity by using small scoops of tea-leaves. Cutting up fruit and vegetables gives chances to enjoy the smell and texture as well as finding pips and seeds. It is good to find jigsaws and games on nearby shelves or to discover corks and sticks in baskets near the sand. Children really can exercise choice and are learning how to tidy up after their activities.
15. The planning for the inside areas is complex but very effective. All adults contribute ideas which fit into a current theme and each day deployment and plans are carefully reviewed and adapted on the basis of successful evaluations. There is a fully collegiate approach to planning. The school's interest in the Reggio Emilia philosophy from Italy has been an influence on what happens in the Nursery and adults are becoming adept at allowing children to develop their own activities through careful intervention. For example, on hearing a discussion about weddings, children were able to make invitations and extend the language of their discussion. Activities started outside are extended into more concentrated projects inside like the building of a Noah's Ark. In these smaller projects children are allowed to develop their own interests through the curriculum. The outside area is used very well as an integral part of each day. Activities in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are available. The planning, however, for this is not as detailed for adult-led activities.
16. Many visitors come to school including the story-teller, owls (accompanied by a school friend) and parents who discuss their jobs. The school uses the local environment very well to help to teach about planting winter bedding plants in the garden and uses visits further afield, as far as London, to learn more about dinosaurs. These additional experiences enrich the curriculum very well.
17. Great care is taken to ensure that those children who are about to transfer to the local lower school have specifically planned teaching especially in the areas of literacy and mathematical development. Those who leave the Nursery at the end of the summer term have special sessions so that they become used to the literacy and numeracy lesson in preparation for the next year. This is a reflection of the inclusive nature of the curriculum and meets the needs of these children particularly well.

Care, guidance and support

Good provision is made for children's care, welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for monitoring academic achievements are excellent. Good arrangements are in place for seeking and considering the children's views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding relationships that exist between children and staff contribute significantly to the excellent support and guidance provided.
- There are very good induction arrangements for children entering the Nursery.
- The provision of childcare facilities for much of each day complements the Nursery provision and has a positive impact on the overall care the Nursery provides.

Commentary

18. The care, guidance and support for children are significant strengths of the Nursery and have many excellent features. Older children talk very positively of the willingness of all adults to listen and of their fairness. Teachers and support staff know children very well and maintain excellent records of their personal development in individual folders, which are readily accessible to parents and children. Entries are made on a daily basis and celebrate children's successes whilst monitoring their personal development very closely. The excellent pastoral leadership and vision of the headteacher have helped to build a team of staff who work very well together, within a caring environment, to provide well-informed support to children through their excellent knowledge of them as individuals.
19. Induction arrangements are very good when children start at the Nursery and great emphasis is placed upon home visits and seeking to develop a supportive partnership with parents by, for example, involving them in preparing a folder which illustrates what their child knows and can do. The Nursery involves parents in considering their individual needs and those of their children and can offer flexible arrangements, involving childcare where appropriate to support a successful start to Nursery. For example, some children attend 'breakfast club', Nursery in the mornings and then attend the Childcare Centre in the afternoons. The way that the Childcare staff are also part of the Nursery team means that children move seamlessly from one to the other.
20. Staff seek to help parents to be involved in their child's learning. The arrangements start the work of establishing the excellent and trusting relationships between children and staff seen during the inspection. Children are confident that there is always an adult nearby who will help them with their activities or chat with them. Using structured but informal opportunities, staff talk to children and value their ideas and suggestions. Great importance is given to providing children with choices and seeking and listening to their views, which sometimes influence decisions that affect the whole Nursery community and the planning of topics.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The very good partnership with parents and the community has a very positive impact on children's learning. There are very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the Nursery and the way in which it helps their children to learn and develop as individuals.
- Parents appreciate the very effective way that the Nursery responds to their concerns.
- Very good links with the community contribute significantly to the children's education.
- Very effective liaison with the adjacent lower school supports the transfer of children at the age of five.

Commentary

21. Parents appreciate the way that the Nursery helps their children to develop. Inspectors support their very positive views. The very good partnership which the Nursery has developed with parents reflects a continuing and improving strength that benefits children's learning.

22. Inspectors judge that the information provided to parents about their child's progress is very good. The newsletters and general information provided are good and parents are invited to two formal consultation meetings each year and have excellent access to staff on a daily basis. Staff have excellent knowledge of children, as individuals, and provide parents with clear targets and a good understanding as to what their children need to do to progress to the next stage of their learning. This information, combined with the accessibility of teachers and the active involvement of parents as partners, makes a very positive contribution to overall quality of the information provided to parents about children's achievements. A small number of parents provide effective help in the Nursery on a regular basis by, for example, working with children on a computer or playing games.
23. Children use the local area extensively to support topic work. For example visits to the Natural History Museum and Knebworth supported work on dinosaurs and a visit to Marston Vale Forest Centre supported work on autumn. Links with local businesses are good and support fund-raising activities and provide welcome sponsorship for publications such as the Nursery's brochure. The Childcare Centre is much appreciated by parents, some of whom have been able to return to work by using this facility. The 'Friends of the Nursery' (FANs) organise visits of up to 150 parents and members of the wider community to London theatres to see such shows as 'Bombay Dreams' and 'Mama Mia.' FANs is run by a small but hardworking committee that successfully organises fundraising activities to raise large sums of money to support the work of the Nursery and provide additional resources and learning opportunities for the children. This is greatly appreciated by staff and benefits the children well.
24. Links with the adjacent lower school, to which most children transfer at the age of five, and other local schools are very good and the Nursery plays a very active part in the local learning pyramid. These links provide good curricular links and opportunities for children to share activities which, combined with the formal arrangements, benefit the transfer of children from Nursery to lower school. The Nursery shares its professional development sessions with all early years staff within the local education authority and this benefits staff development and widens the opportunities available.
25. The nursery has very good, although informal, arrangements to listen to parents' concerns and views and tries to respond positively. For example, parents of summer-born children were concerned that, as their children get no reception class experience in the lower school because they are already at the end of the reception year when they transfer, formal and structured literacy and numeracy lessons were difficult for them to cope with. The Nursery responded by reviewing its practice to prepare these children better for transfer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Senior staff provide very good leadership. Management is very good. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is committed to continual improvement and the way in which she has developed teamwork in the Nursery is excellent.
- The way in which staff are enabled to fulfil their management roles is very good and contributes positively to standards and achievement.
- Governors use their expertise effectively for the benefit of the Nursery.

Commentary

26. The headteacher provides exemplary leadership, supported by the deputy headteacher, teacher and support staff. She has established a caring and talented team who are committed to the inclusion of all children, regardless of background or level of attainment. She is central to the team, sharing in the daily teaching and management of the Nursery. As she works so closely with the staff, she monitors provision constantly and this contributes very positively to the very good teaching seen during the inspection. All adults, whether teaching or support staff, show the same high quality skills that help the children to achieve so well. A very good feature is the way that some of the support staff have been students in the Nursery and have subsequently been taken on as staff members. Students currently training in the Nursery are accepted as full team members and praise the high quality support they receive. It is this commitment to the development of teamwork that contributes to the sense of cohesion evident in the Nursery.
27. Another reason for the success of the Nursery is the time and attention given to monitoring and evaluation. The teaching staff have their own areas of responsibility, sharing the areas of learning between them. They are given time to monitor the curriculum, identifying areas for development. They also monitor assessment records as this gives them a very clear view of activities or resources that are underused. The headteacher also monitors each child's records and gives feedback to staff. This ensures that all children receive a balanced curriculum.
28. The headteacher and staff have introduced features from Reggio Emilia, a philosophy from work in the Italian town, underpinning a child-centred approach to the curriculum to further improve provision. This is proving to be successful, particularly in the choices offered to children and the very high quality resources. The Childcare Centre that has recently been introduced is another example of how the headteacher improves provision for both children and parents. It is this commitment to improving what is already of good quality that contributes to the very good quality of education provided. It is commendable that the headteacher has achieved this whilst also acting as headteacher at the neighbouring lower school last term.
29. Several governors are recently appointed and they are gaining a good understanding of the work of the Nursery. There is a high turnover of parent governors because the children do not stay at Nursery for long enough for parents to serve a full term as governors. The Nursery manages this very well. The Nursery has only taken responsibility for its budget recently but the governors take this very seriously. The finance committee monitors spending carefully and the chair uses his own financial expertise to good effect. A good example was seen during the inspection of how governors do all they can to support the Nursery. A governor, who is a professional story teller, visited and fascinated the children with his stories and amusing actions. Not only did the children develop their listening and language skills but they also had good opportunities to explore their feelings. This contribution made a valuable impact on the children's education.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The high quality of education has been improved further since the previous inspection. Children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. They become full-time at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday and then move on to lower school. The children are divided into two groups – Red Nursery and Green Nursery - for registration and story times but the Nursery functions as one unit at other times. Each staff member is allocated a small group of children and takes responsibility for their welfare and assessment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching places very good emphasis on the development of these skills and, as a result, children are already doing better than most children of their age by the time they leave Nursery and are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Children achieve very well.
- Children respond very well to the expectation that they will behave very well and take some responsibility for their own learning.
- Children play and work together very harmoniously.

Commentary

30. Children come into Nursery willingly and are encouraged to show that they have arrived by placing their name card under the correct letter on the alphabet board. They greet each other happily and settle immediately to an activity until it is time to move into teaching groups. They take responsibility for small tasks, such as asking parents to come in at home time and tidying up at the end of sessions. One child willingly explained the activity to another who arrived late. Good manners are encouraged with children being expected to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They are encouraged to ask and answer questions and to develop social skills. For example, an older boy introduced his younger friend to a visitor.
31. Exciting activities are used to develop these skills and also those in other areas of learning. For example, good table manners such as how to use a knife and fork are encouraged through cutting up a variety of fruit and vegetables. Not only did the children develop their social skills but they also learned the names and properties of a wide range of interesting fruits. Some children satisfied their curiosity by fetching soil from the garden to plant the apple pips and pomegranate seeds that they found.
32. Numerous examples were seen where children chose their own resources from the attractive range available. For example, when children were making models from recyclable materials, they chose what they were going to make and which materials to

use. They responded very positively to the expectation that they should use the tape dispenser themselves and fetch and replace their own glue. Children used the overhead projector independently to project patterns on the wall, delighting in trying the effects of different materials and adjusting the focus accordingly.

33. A particular strength is the way that children help each other and share resources. At milk time, for example, children pour their own milk and pass the bottle to their friends. They wash up painting equipment in pairs, helping each other to dry the brushes. When playing outside, they willingly take turns on the wheeled toys and they help each other to use the computers. In the role-play area, children take turns to feed the 'baby' and play very well together. It is the very strong emphasis on the development of independence skills and behaving responsibly that contributes very positively to the development of social skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff make very good use of assessment to meet the children's needs and consequently, children achieve very well.
- There is a very strong focus on the development of language skills.
- The quality of teaching is very good and excellent use is made of support staff.

Commentary

34. Most children are on course to reach the standards expected for their age and some are likely to exceed them. This is because the Nursery takes every opportunity to compensate for the poorly developed language skills that many children have on entry. For example, all adults use questions very effectively to find out what children know and to extend their learning. During the inspection, a group was playing a matching game with a teacher. This game was very challenging and the children were expected to respond to questions such as 'Why do you think it is that one?' Adults continually talk to and question children when working or playing alongside them and this contributes very positively to their very good achievement. For example, a Nursery nurse was helping the very youngest children with jigsaws and encouraged conversation by asking questions such as 'Have you seen an elephant?'
35. Although most children have poorly developed language skills when they start Nursery, there are a number of higher attaining children. Very good assessment, where adults continually note children's progress and adjust their teaching accordingly, means that the needs of all are very well catered for. For example, although many children can 'tell a story' using pictures to help them and some can recognise several initial sounds, higher attaining children, who can already read simple texts confidently, are offered activities that are very well matched to their needs. Assessments are collated in the children's 'Special Folders' of which they are very proud. During the inspection, two children were seen using their folders to compare the marks they had made to represent their name when they started Nursery with their neatly written names done recently. This gives them a very good understanding of their own achievement. Children practise early writing skills by making marks on paper or by writing simple words. A positive feature is the way that higher

attaining children have written the captions to several friezes in the Nursery, showing a clearly developed style.

36. The very strong sense of teamwork shown by all adults also contributes very positively to standards and achievement. The way in which the Nursery nurses and teaching assistants are used to extend learning is exemplary. Many examples were seen of very good teaching by support staff during the inspection. They take the lead in teaching specific skills to small groups and have responsibility for collating the assessments for their own pastoral group of children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in this area of learning and most are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of their reception year.
- The quality of teaching is very good and teachers use the very good resources in an exemplary way.
- Children learn very well through effective teaching for small groups.
- Mathematical ideas are used well in other areas of learning.

Commentary

37. Children want to learn because they are fascinated by the very good resources and activities are inviting and stimulating. It is really good to pour tea-leaves to find out about 'full' and 'empty' and truly interesting to have a new book to help you to find shapes around the classroom! Children consolidate and extend their counting skills in well planned adult-led activities.
38. Teachers know their children very well and keep precise, extensive and accurate assessments based on observations. This means that they are able to plan the content of their group teaching very effectively. Very good opportunities are made for older and higher attaining children to begin to count to 20 and make estimates to compute the answers to simple addition and subtraction sums using counting 'people'. Using miniature 'nice things' gives scope for the teacher to skilfully adapt the game and process to suit the needs of her more wide-ranging ability group. Children are given the time to carry out their tasks and are not hurried. Their answers are valued and used to help them to learn more. They receive a lot of praise and encouragement. This makes learning fun.
39. Every opportunity is taken to use mathematical ideas in other areas of the curriculum, counting everything, recognising patterns and using games and tiles. In a discussion over cutting a piece of wood, the vocabulary of comparison of size was used effectively. This illustrates the very good understanding that all adults have of the Foundation Stage curriculum and is the reason why children learn so easily as they see the links and relevance of what they are doing.
40. Effective monitoring of this area of the curriculum takes place through the study of planning and children's records. As a result, areas for development are identified and in this way the curriculum is under continuous review. The very effective records of progress are always kept available for children and parents to share. Children particularly enjoy seeing themselves and their work recorded in photographs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching, especially in the science area, ensures that children achieve very well and most are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

- Children use their senses well to learn about the world around them.
- Children learn independence through making things.

Commentary

41. The quality and variety of both teacher-led and child-selected activities mean that children learn to observe the world around them very well. Children cut and examine fruit and vegetables, discussing smells and textures and discovering seeds. They love gardening and plant winter cyclamen in beds in the garden and learn that all living things need water to grow. Very well thought through opportunities to use light boxes to examine natural autumn materials with different shapes, colours and textures give meaning to learning and provide moments of wonder. All teachers make exemplary use of resources. Children want to participate in activities and their learning flourishes through the chance to exercise choice and lead discussions.
42. Children have regular contact with computers and learn how to use the 'mouse' efficiently to select pictures numbers and letters. Programs are available to support learning in mathematical development as well as in literacy. Children also use drawing programs well to make coloured pictures. Adults intervene effectively here and children benefit from personal or paired support. They answer very good questions, which help them to make very good progress with their learning.
43. There are many opportunities for children to make things. They learn how to join recyclable materials, once again, making choices from an attractively presented range of materials. Kites made inside are frequently flown in the garden. Children have very effective support when learning how to manage wood. Concentration on the work in hand is intense and very good links are made to developing mathematical concepts through the discussion of size and position. Adults lose no opportunity to extend language skills through very good questioning. The possibility to register your turn by adding your name to a list also contributes very well to promoting independence in learning. Teachers make particularly informative observations of children's involvement in activities and these are recorded very clearly, indicating the very good progress made through the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning.
- Children achieve very well due to very good teaching.
- The outside area is used very well for children to run, jump, slide and balance.
- Children have many opportunities to learn how to use tools effectively.

Commentary

44. The very good accommodation outside provides an attractive and inviting space for children. The outside area is used very well and children have plenty of opportunities to climb, slide and use large wheeled toys. They learn to use space effectively and play co-

operatively, sharing large bikes with their passenger. Adults help children with steps and slides so they become confident. Children learn how to throw and catch and enjoy 'shooting' into baskets. They make very good progress here. Children are able to participate in all areas of the curriculum outside. For example, using the house as a Baker's shop linked to the nursery-rhyme theme, becoming involved with gardening - put on your boots first! - and building Humpty's wall using bricks and mortar, hand-mixed with sand. Choice is a central principle for activities and the particularly good levels of staffing mean that there is always someone available to join in a game or help with the trolley of building bricks. This is particularly beneficial for children with SEN. Music time also enables children to improve their co-ordination effectively while balancing like the elephants in the song. Adult-led activities happen less frequently in the outside area.

45. The wide range of activities throughout the Nursery means that children have a very good choice of pencils, pens and brushes to use. They learn how to handle tiny things in mathematics and learn to use pencils effectively while learning to trace with the help of an adult. Particularly good emphasis is placed on health and safety when learning to use sharp tools at the wood-working bench. Individual instruction establishes skills so that this can become a choice activity later.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis on first-hand experiences and making choices means that children achieve very well.
- Children are on course to exceed the goals expected for their age because the quality of teaching is very good.
- Resources are of high quality and their use is excellent.

Commentary

46. Activities to stimulate creative development are regularly provided. A particular strength is the way that exciting materials are readily available and the children are encouraged to choose and collect their own resources. For example, when making models or collages, the children are not given the materials or told what they must make, but are encouraged to follow their own interests and choose what is appropriate to use. This gives them a very good understanding of how to join and manipulate many materials and encourages their creativity. Resources are very well chosen to fascinate and stimulate the children. For example, a wide variety of lace, paper fragments and spiky pompoms encouraged children to make wonderful patterns on the wall using an overhead projector.
47. During a painting activity, children chose their own paper and leaves before carefully printing patterns, marvelling with the teacher at the patterns produced. Every moment was used very effectively to extend learning. For example, a higher attaining child counted 11 leaf prints with encouragement from the teacher, while a lower attainer learned 'wide' and 'narrow' by comparing two leaves.
48. It would be hard for a child not to be enthused by the music area. This alcove is hung with beautiful drapes and small lights sparkle from under fabric in the ceiling. Musical instruments of a very high quality are readily available and children use them

independently and in small group sessions. During the inspection, children showed that they could sing nursery rhymes and simple songs with enthusiasm. Most could beat time appropriately while singing 'Baa baa black sheep'. The teacher encouraged them to develop an understanding of 'loud' and 'soft' when playing to 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' and learned that it is a lullaby through the teacher's explanation.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
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).