

INSPECTION REPORT

BUSHBURY NURSERY SCHOOL

Bushbury

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104285

Headteacher: Mrs Sheila Ordidge

Lead inspector: Mrs Penny Parrish
Dates of inspection: 30 November – 01 December 2004

Inspection number: 266543

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:	69
School address:	Bushbury Lane Bushbury Wolverhampton West Midlands
Postcode:	WV10 8JP
Telephone number:	01902 558118
Fax number:	01902 558118
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Gardner
Date of previous inspection:	8 December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bushbury Nursery School is situated within the urban area of Wolverhampton. Forty-two children, aged between three and four years, attend each morning and afternoon session, mostly on a part-time basis but with 15 of the children attending full-time. Most children complete three or four terms in the nursery before transferring to reception classes in neighbouring schools. Most children are of white British ethnic background, and a small proportion have black Caribbean, Asian or mixed ethnic backgrounds. All children have English as their home language. The school provides care over lunchtime for about a third of the children. Four children have special educational needs, with individual education programmes, and many others receive support with speech difficulties. The attainments of most children as they start nursery are below average. A high proportion of families experience greater than average social and economic hardship.

The school has been part of the local Education Action Zone over the past three years but these arrangements are now drawing to a close. This year, the school has earned a Healthy Schools Award and the Investors in People Award. In 2003, the school qualified for a Schools Achievement Award and a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

The local education authority has plans in hand to link the nursery with a newly developing children's centre being established locally, and is currently in the process of providing options for relocation for consideration by the governors of the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22380	Mrs Penny Parrish	Lead inspector	Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Creative development
9327	Mr Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	
29504	Mrs Shirley Herring	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Mathematical development Physical development Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bushbury Nursery is a very good school. The headteacher's excellent leadership and exceptionally clear vision ensures that the quality of provision is continuously moving forward. A very effective staff team, with an excellent contribution from nursery nurses, focuses very effectively on the learning needs of the children. Teaching is of consistently high quality and supplemented very well by visiting specialists. The attainments of most children as they start nursery are below average, with significant difficulties for most with personal, social and emotional development and with speaking and listening skills. Nonetheless, standards are average in language and mathematical development, and above average in all other areas of learning as the children transfer to reception classes in neighbouring primary schools. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher.
- The very good achievement of the children.
- An inspired staff team, strongly committed to providing very well for the children.
- Very good teaching that encourages and engages the children very well.
- Exceptionally strong provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development.
- A little more could be done to promote writing and calculation skills for the older and higher attaining children.

Since the last inspection in 1998, the school has made very good improvement. The children are achieving much more, with many starting with lower attainments on entry. All areas of learning have been promoted very well. Issues from the last inspection, related to monitoring the quality of the school's provision and checking that all children experience the whole curriculum, have been rigorously improved. Staff are now much more knowledgeable and confident about how to help children learn.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good. Achievement is very good in all areas of learning except for literacy and mathematical development, where achievement is good, overall. From a below average starting point, most children are on course to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the first year in primary school for communication, language and literacy and for mathematical development. The children's language skills develop very well to reach an average level of competency. For personal, social and emotional development and all other areas of learning, the goals are likely to be exceeded. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. Children with special educational needs are supported very well; they achieve very well and make very good progress towards the targets set within individual education plans.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Children have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is of a high standard. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, overall. The school has good procedures in place to promote good attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good and children make rapid progress. Children thoroughly enjoy learning and tackle activities with enthusiasm, helped by the very good encouragement and interest of staff. Within a very strong overall

picture, there is room to expect a little more of older and higher attaining children in writing and calculating.

The curriculum is very good. Staff make the nursery an exciting and stimulating place to learn. The needs of all children are met very well. Staff respond very well to children's preferences and interests, and make learning irresistible. All areas of learning are provided for both indoors and outside in order to meet the differing learning styles and interests of the children. The vigilance of staff and the very good relationships with children and their families ensure that care for the welfare of the children is highly effective and supports their achievement very well. The school's links with parents, the community and other schools are very good. Visits into the locality and visiting specialists, such as artists and musicians, enhance the children's learning very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the nursery are very good, resulting in provision of high quality that meets the children's needs very well. The headteacher's excellent vision and inspiration provide a considerable driving force for the continuous improvement of the school's provision and standards. The recently established governing body is still engaged in establishing management systems, but provides a very interested 'sounding board' for new ideas and reviews of the school's work. The school has only recently taken over control of its own budget. Financial systems are sound and the school manages to supplement its allocation from the local education authority very well with funding from other sources.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very high regard for the nursery and value the work of the staff and the very good progress their children make. They strongly agree that their children enjoy their time in the nursery. The children's evident happiness and enthusiasm for learning verifies their enjoyment of school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Focus more closely, where appropriate, on developing writing and calculation skills, especially for the older and higher attaining children.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

The children's attainments on entry to the nursery are below average and lower than at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is very good and children make rapid progress. There has been very good improvement in overall achievement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The starting point for most children is below average when they are admitted to the nursery, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy skills.
- Achievement is very good, overall, for all children, including those with special educational needs.
- By the time the children transfer to reception classes in local schools, standards are above average, overall, although in literacy and mathematical development, standards are average.

Commentary

1. The children's very good achievement removes many of the barriers to learning identified as they start nursery with below average attainments. The school's assessment records identify particular deficits in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy development.
2. The very good curriculum and teaching provided mean that children's learning is rapid. Attainment moves from below to above average over the four terms that most children spend in the nursery. The main strengths are in the school's very good development of children's personal, social and emotional skills and their communication and language skills, whatever their attainments on admission. These achievements enable the children to take full advantage of the very good curriculum provided.
3. Despite very good achievement, standards do not exceed average for communication, language and literacy development and mathematical development. For speaking and listening, this is largely due to the significant language difficulties of most children on entry. Most do very well to bring their attainment to average. Expectations for the older and higher attaining children are not quite high enough, however, for literacy. Early reading skills are stronger than writing skills. Children love books and stories and engage frequently in drawings or role-play about familiar stories. Although most can readily identify at least their own names, few children can write their names without considerable help. Higher attaining children are good at hearing the first sound within words and some can spot rhyming words, but very few can link this understanding to any letter shapes. Opportunities are missed to promote these higher skills.
4. Similarly for mathematical development, children achieve well to meet the requirements for counting and recognising shape and pattern, but older and higher attaining children are not given sufficient practice in simple calculations. In these aspects of learning, most higher attaining children, especially, are not stretched quite as well as other groups. These are weaknesses in an otherwise very strong picture. For mathematical development, the school

has recently formed a small focus group to resolve this issue but more children could be included in this work.

5. The children find the imaginative and interesting activities made available each day irresistible, and, with the staff's generally very good understanding of the needs of the age group, learning proceeds at a very good pace in all other areas of learning. Children learn to look after their own personal needs well, and for the children who start nursery wearing nappies, this represents exceptionally good development. The high priority given to developing children's language enables learning across the curriculum, especially enhancing social and communication skills. Children with special educational needs achieve very well and are closely tracked against the realistic targets set within their individual education plans. The funding by the local education authority's special needs team of an extra nursery nurse to support these children results in very effective provision that meets their needs. No children have English as an additional language, and those with minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as all other children. Boys generally achieve as well as girls although more boys experience language difficulties on entry, which means that, overall, girls' attainment is higher than boys on transfer to reception. The school has worked hard to raise the attainment of boys through taking care to provide activities that follow their interests. In addition, the curriculum made available outdoors has been significantly broadened to include all areas of learning, so as to meet the needs of those, including many boys, who prefer to work outside.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This area is a strength that has been maintained and nurtured very well since the last inspection. Children display very good attitudes and behaviour. Provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and they achieve very well. Attendance and punctuality are both satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's confidence and independence develop at an exceptional pace.
- Relationships are very strong, creating a very effective context for children's learning.
- Children respond very well to the school's high expectations for good, constructive behaviour.
- A very wide range of stimulating activities means that children enjoy coming to school.
- The very warm and welcoming ethos of the school, with an extensive variety of visits and visitors, promotes children's personal development very well.

Commentary

6. The strong focus of the nursery is to give children ready access to activities that follow their interests in all areas of learning. As a result, they develop a great deal of independence for their age. Because the range of activities is wide and very varied, children are eager to come to school and join in enthusiastically, so developing very good attitudes to school from their earliest time in the nursery. The very good relationships and teamwork between all the adults, and the respect they show to the children, provide a very warm atmosphere, set a good example for the children to follow and give children confidence in themselves. All adults take time to talk to the children, whatever the activity, and this close attention to the individual improves children's self esteem. This is particularly effective in making children with special educational needs feel secure and valued, thereby helping them to make very good progress.

7. Children behave very well and respond positively to the high expectations for behaviour, which focus clearly on consideration for others. A strong aspect is the way in which children are helped to make informed choices about their behaviour, and become aware of the consequences of their decisions. For children with special educational needs, a clear programme is agreed at the start of the session, which helps to focus their attention and to improve their concentration and good behaviour. Those who spend lunchtime in school behave very well, helped by very orderly and sensible routines and expectations.
8. Children make very good progress in all aspects of their personal development because it is given a high priority. Children develop a strong spiritual awareness through the many sensory experiences provided; through observing the patterns of the year during visits, and through an appreciation of the celebrations of different religions. They develop a clear understanding of right and wrong through rules and routines that are simple and consistently followed. There is a strong sense of community in the nursery as children relate to their family groups and enjoy many opportunities of working together. The children are taught to value their own skills and those of others. This helps them to appreciate each other's different talents and needs. Children develop a very good cultural awareness through wide ranging experiences, including working with the artist in residence. The school's very good resources reflect a rich cultural diversity; the range of cooking utensils in the role-play areas, for example, and the good variety of storybooks. This awareness is significantly enhanced through many visitors, such as the Mighty Zulu Nation dance workshop.
9. Most children attend regularly and arrive punctually, with most parents responding well to the continuous encouragement from staff. The school supports individual family difficulties well to promote good attendance. Although absences are checked with parents, no data is kept to help school to analyse authorised or unauthorised absence. No child has ever been excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good quality of education** for the children. Teaching is very good and the children learn very well, making at least good progress in all areas of learning, and very good in most. The school is well staffed, promoting rapid learning for children. Resources are very good and the activities provided are captivating and engage the children very well. The accommodation is good, overall, being spacious indoors but with a limited area available outdoors. The children are cared for very well and guided particularly well towards good achievement. Parents strongly support the nursery and all it does for their children.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is very good, resulting in very good learning for the children. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The consistently high quality of teaching ensures very good achievement for children from a lower than average starting point on admission to the nursery.
- The staff's excellent encouragement and engagement of children help them to develop an exceptionally good capacity to work independently and collaboratively.
- Nursery nurses make an excellent contribution to the success of the nursery.
- Expectations of the staff are generally very high, but not quite enough is expected of higher attaining and older children in developing their writing and mathematical calculation skills.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	13	0	0	0	0

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

10. The children learn rapidly because the teaching is of consistently high quality. Teaching is very good, overall, and never less than good. Assessment systems are very effective and staff understand the needs of the children very well. The staff team is well informed on the areas of learning set nationally, and strongly committed to doing their best for the children. Individual evaluations of activities and weekly reviews by the staff team ensure that teaching and learning are constantly improving.
11. The good number of adults in the nursery means that children are usually taught in small groups and sometimes individually. Small ‘family groups’ provide a comfortable arrangement for teaching and learning, with frequent opportunities for children to participate. Very good teamwork and daily update meetings for staff allow assessment information to be shared easily. This enables all staff to intervene well to promote and maintain learning for all children. Because relationships are very good, children feel secure enough to take a confident and optimistic approach to all activities. Timely interventions by adults show sensitivity on the part of staff about when to help and when to pause while children watch or explore. The nursery nurses provide excellent support for teachers, and children derive tremendous benefit from their work. Time is used very well and children have a very active and busy day, with continuous opportunities to learn through well thought-out activities. Frequent well-targeted praise and small rewards, such as stickers, make sure that children understand their successes very well and enjoy a good sense of achievement.
12. To make learning meaningful to children, staff try to incorporate the children’s interests noted in previous activities into plans for future work. This is effective in helping children to achieve greater understanding. Activities planned for one area of learning overlap quite naturally into another. For example, children learn about shape through making square sandwiches, which they then cut into triangles. The opportunity to choose their own fillings from a good selection makes the work irresistible, as well as developing creative skills. Eating the sandwiches at snack-time provides a compulsive reward for their efforts and allows them to judge the flavour achieved. Backed by a story of sandwich making, with pictures closely observed, older children feel ready to explain their choices to the family group and to try to say what they have learned.
13. Staff are rightfully very proud of their success in helping the children learn and generally their expectations for the children are very high. A weaker element in an otherwise very strong picture is that the school does not always expect enough of older and higher attaining children in learning to write their own names independently, or to recognise some letter shapes readily to match the good work done in identifying sounds within words. Similarly, more could be done to help older children to tackle simple calculations. Although assessment systems are very good, overall, and staff have general guidance on improving children’s early writing, the children’s achievements in recognising and writing their names, or any other familiar words,

letters or numbers is not tracked systematically. This leads to some missed opportunities to promote further learning.

14. Because teaching is very good, children with special educational needs learn very well. They thrive because of the very wide range of interesting activities and because they are encouraged to build on their own interests. They benefit from very good individual tuition using individualised learning programmes. Success in small steps is celebrated and this improves children's confidence and self esteem. The extra nursery nurse appointed by the local education authority to support children showing difficulties with accessing the curriculum is skilled and well organised, and makes a significant impact on the achievement of these children.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good, with highly effective opportunities provided to enrich learning. Staff are well-qualified and there is a good number of support staff and specialist visitors. The nursery is very well equipped and accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are wide ranging and meet the needs of young children very well.
- Regular visits into the locality and visitors to school provide very good enrichments to learning.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
- Some literacy and numeracy activities are not routinely matched to the needs of higher attaining children who are about to transfer to the reception class.

Commentary

15. The very effective curriculum is firmly based on practical, first-hand experiences that are innovative and captivating, and that enable children to achieve very well. Very good improvements since the last inspection have made sure that issues related to the breadth of the curriculum have been fully addressed. Though procedures for tracking children across different areas of learning are informal, leaders of the family groups have a good awareness of what each child has covered and take appropriate steps to cover any gaps. The curriculum is evaluated routinely by staff and adjustments and extensions added to follow children's interests and the outcomes of earlier activities. For example, singing the rhyme, 'One, two three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive', raised the question of whether fish do indeed bite. Samples of rainbow trout and sardines were brought into school from the fishmongers to enable children to examine the mouths of the fish and to feel for any teeth.
16. Central priority is rightly given to the development of children's personal, social and emotional skills and their communication and language development. These skills permeate all activities throughout the day, helping children to achieve very well. Sometimes, however, lack of emphasis on developing writing and calculating skills restricts achievement in these skills, especially for the higher attaining children soon to transfer to a reception class. The school has recently put into place 'focus groups' that help teachers and nursery nurses to respond more directly to children's identified needs, skills and talents. These group activities go some way to towards extending numeracy skills for the children involved. The curriculum for literacy is generally rich but does not extend children's writing quite far enough.
17. The school's very good provision for children's personal and social development includes good attention to their health education. Healthy eating is promoted well through providing fruit at snack time and promoting healthy options when children prepare food. Care for themselves and others is central to the school's work, and social skills are developed very well through all activities, and also through specific sessions such as discussions that take place with children sitting in a circle.
18. Provision for special educational needs is very good and helps these children to achieve very well. The high level of care and individual support, as well as specific provision, such as individualised learning programmes and focused teaching, ensures that work is well matched to targets in children's individual educational plans. The school is fortunate in having an extra nursery nurse, funded by the local education authority. Her specific role is to provide extra nurturing for children with special educational needs and this works very well in practice for the children and their families.
19. The children benefit from the quality and generous level of staffing. The school's very good curriculum is recognised by the local education authority and the teachers are appointed to support training in other local nurseries and playgroups. The good number of nursery nurses and their considerable skills are used very successfully to advance children's learning. In

addition, a strong feature is the use of visiting specialists, such as the artist in residence and the information and communication technology (ICT) consultant, to lead the learning of both children and staff. For example, the children are now very proficient in using interactive whiteboards.

20. The indoor accommodation is spacious, clean and well ordered and used imaginatively to stimulate children's interest. The outside area is small but used very effectively to support all areas of learning, particularly physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The family room is a valuable addition since the last inspection and provides a large hall space, used as a dining area and as a base for a 'carers and toddlers' group. Resources are very good and support children's learning very well in all areas. Frequent visits undertaken by children into the locality, such as to a parkland education centre and a local 'rumble tumble' centre for physical development, supplement the nursery's resources for learning very well.

Care, guidance and support

The vigilance of staff and very good relationships with children and their families ensure that care for the welfare of the children is highly effective and supports children's achievement very well. Staff make the nursery an exciting and stimulating place to learn, and they respond very well to children's preferences and interests in their work and play.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systems and procedures to ensure the health, safety and care of children are very well structured.
- The nursery provides a very effective network of support, based on a very good understanding of children's individual interests and personal needs.
- The nursery constantly seeks to take account of children's views.

Commentary

21. The school's systems for ensuring the children's health and welfare, whatever their family circumstances, are very well led by the headteacher and are stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Procedures follow the guidance of the local authority and the school has very good contacts with the family support and welfare services. All staff are kept up to date with training and are vigilant in all matters of child welfare. Health and safety routines are very well managed and any concerns are dealt with promptly. There are thorough risk assessments before all educational visits outside the nursery. All children are taught to behave and play safely in the nursery, and their welfare, happiness and safety are paramount.
22. Many children have their first taste of nursery through attending the Toddler Group, the twice-weekly session for two-year-olds and their parents or carers. By the time the children start nursery, they are familiar with some of the other children, the staff and the building. The leaders of the family groups in the nursery visit the children in their homes to prepare for a good start, to help relationships and to discuss any individual issues. The family groups of nine to twelve children are effective in ensuring the good care of children. They meet regularly to share learning, playing and socialising activities. The relationships between the children and staff are strong and teachers know very quickly how children are feeling, and progressing, and how to give them individual help and support. Staff monitor every child's well-being regularly by using a helpfully structured series of questions about their mood, health, attitudes, behaviour and attendance. In addition, each child's learning development is rigorously monitored. This network of support works very well and is a key factor in the very

good achievement made. Very good support and guidance for children with special educational needs enables them to achieve very well.

23. Parents say their children thoroughly enjoy the nursery and this is very clearly seen in the fun they have, their excitement and enjoyment, every day. Each child's profile of progress and achievement is shared regularly with parents. The profile also shows the children's views of what they have particularly enjoyed – or not. The nursery responds very well to the children's expressions of interest and enjoyment, and ensures that the activities provided are those that the children enjoy.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's very good links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges maintain and build on strengths noted in the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works co-operatively with parents, keeping them very well informed and involved.
- Links with the local community enrich the curriculum and quality of education very well.
- Involvement with other schools and nurseries locally enhances the reputation of the school and the skills of the teaching staff.

Commentary

24. The nursery is extremely popular with parents, who are very pleased with the co-operative and friendly way it works so successfully with them and their children. There are very good systems for maintaining close and constructive contact with parents and carers. These begin with the Toddler Group for children under-three and the home visit made by staff to all families. From the 'Welcome to Nursery' booklet onwards, parents are kept very well informed by notes, letters, diary sheets and notice boards, in addition to informal discussions. Regular consultations with parents keep them up-to-date on their child's assessment profile, which shows their progress with learning, samples of their work and an abundance of photographs. Staff and parents share ideas on how children can best be helped at home and at school, and parents are free to add their own comments to their children's records. Liaison booklets enable parents and their child's family group leader to share information on the child's interest in and understanding of books in order to promote reading. Parents of children with special educational needs are closely involved in plans to help them make progress, and they make positive, written contributions to regular reviews of their children's targets.
25. Parents have frequent opportunities to join the nursery at work. Many enjoy sharing the family 'Circle Time' each week with their children and the staff. Occasional workshops explain the nursery's work and courses are run, for example on making story boxes for use in the nursery. Half-termly 'challenges' are arranged, when parents are asked to work at home with their children on small projects. For example, the recent Christmas challenge asked parents to help their children to make a Christmas card for a friend, and a decoration for the nursery's Christmas tree, and also to learn the words to a selection of carols in preparation for the annual nativity celebration. Parents make a good contribution to the life of the nursery and to their children's education. By completing a simple questionnaire when their children leave the nursery, they are able to say what activities they particularly valued and any things that might be improved. Responses are overwhelmingly positive.

26. The nursery makes very good use of its local community and is also an important part of it. For example, children visit the local country park, a farm, a sea-life centre and events at the local university, as well as their immediate neighbours at the church. Many visitors are invited into school, including artists in residence, musicians such as choirs, steel bands and Zulu dancers, story-tellers, animal keepers and, sometimes, children from other nurseries. Consequently, the range of experiences available to the children is enriched by the community far beyond what the nursery can provide from its own resources. A number of very effective initiatives, funded by the local Education Action Zone, have significantly raised the quality of education for the children in the nursery. These include funding for a speech therapist to work in school, equipping a toy library and family-learning courses in ICT and literacy. Children and their parents get a great deal of benefit and enjoyment from these arrangements.
27. Contacts with local schools and other nurseries are very beneficial. Well-established links with local primary schools enhance transfer to reception classes. Staff numbers are supplemented by the many student placements at the nursery, which is an accepted centre of good practice. The headteacher is a key member of the local Early Years Education Forum and the nursery regularly hosts training events and visitors. All these contacts enhance the professional skills of the nursery staff and, in turn, benefit the children. The teachers in the nursery share their expertise through supporting training programmes locally and by working as mentors within other nursery settings nearby.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the nursery school are very good, resulting in provision of high quality that meets the children's needs very well. The new governing body is engaged in establishing systems and expectations but provides a sound further tier of leadership for the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's excellent vision and inspiration drive the continuous improvement of the school's provision and standards.
- The staff team works in close harmony to plan and provide very well for the needs of young children.
- Monitoring systems are thorough and ensure that children's needs are generally met very well.
- The school's strong commitment to its philosophy and to sharing its aims and methods with other practitioners puts it in the front line of educational innovation locally.

Commentary

28. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and inspiration to the school. She has successfully built on the good provision noted in the last inspection and helped the school to become much more effective, raising the level of children's achievement from sound to very good. She is enthusiastically supported by an efficient and closely-knit staff team, in which the qualified teacher does much to lead nursery nurses in putting plans into action. The success of the nursery is recognised by the local education authority and it is justly used as a training opportunity for other nurseries and neighbouring providers of early years' education. In turn, the school takes much of its inspiration from the provision for young children in Reggio Emilia, a city in Italy, and seeks to emulate its successful practice. This guiding philosophy nurtures the pursuit of excellent provision, and the consistently high quality of the nursery provides valuable training opportunities for other local practitioners.

29. Monitoring and self-evaluation systems are rigorous and greatly improved since the last inspection. The school has an accurate view of its own strengths and areas for further development, and these are managed very well through the school improvement plan. Enlisting the help of specialists, such as artists in residence and an ICT expert, proved to be a very effective way of taking the school forward. Recent access to assessments made at the end of the reception year is extending the staff team's knowledge of what the children achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. The headteacher has lost no time in putting plans into place to target the school's strategies for literacy and numeracy in the light of this feedback.
30. The school is strongly committed to providing very well for all children, whatever their needs. Staff show a perceptive awareness of children's personal and emotional needs and differing styles of learning as well as what activities interest and engage different children. The interests and aptitudes of younger and older children, girls and boys, quiet or extravert children, for instance, are all taken usefully into account. Provision for children with special educational needs is managed very well. Individual programmes are carefully thought out. The very good records are clear and informative, and the realistic targets set are regularly reviewed. Very good links with outside agencies and a local special school ensure specialist help and advice where needed.
31. Governance is sound. The headteacher has established a close working relationship with the new governing body and seeks to involve them further in management decisions. The governing body, in only its second year in office, is well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Training has been organised to help both staff and the new governors to understand their role. The school is adept at securing best value. Astute use of finance and very effective provision ensure that the school gives very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	160,400
Total expenditure	160,001
Expenditure per pupil	3,809

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to the next	399

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between all in the nursery and the very interesting activities provided help children to develop very good attitudes to school.
- The children's independence is encouraged in all aspects of the nursery's work.
- Children behave very well because they get clear information to help them to make informed choices about what they should do.
- Children learn to respect different cultures.

Commentary

32. Children start nursery with personal and social skills that are below average, and in a significant number of cases, well below average. Very good teaching, which rightly gives a high priority to this area of learning, enables children to achieve very well. When they transfer to the reception year, the majority of children have acquired skills that are in advance of what would normally be expected for their age.
33. The nursery is laid out in such a way that all the resources are accessible to children, and so they quickly develop independence as they choose tasks that follow their own interests. The range of activities is wide and very varied; children are eager to come to school and join in enthusiastically, developing very good attitudes to school from an early age. The very good relationships and teamwork between all the adults, and the respect they show to the children, provide a very warm atmosphere, encourage learning and set a good model for the children to follow. This was seen when a large group of children wanted to make sandwiches and were scrupulous about waiting their turn, without the need for any adult intervention.
34. Children respond well to the high expectations for behaviour in the nursery and are very clear about the daily routines and simple rules. A strong aspect of the very good management of behaviour is the way children are always given a clear choice as to what they should do and the possible consequences. This was seen when one child was given the choice, gently but firmly, of sitting quietly to listen to the story or continuing to make a noise, thus spoiling the story for others, and so having to take time out of the room. Pausing for thought, he chose to listen with his group and, consequently, all enjoyed the story.
35. All members of the school community are equally and highly valued, and this helps children to gain confidence as they realise that what they say and what they do matters. They learn to value the views and needs of others and consistently well-focused praise and encouragement helps them to develop the ability to co-operate very quickly. Despite the delayed language development for many, the children agree and maintain interactive roles in socio-dramatic play and shared tasks remarkably soon. They develop a good understanding of different cultures represented in the school and in its resources, and learn about wider cultures through visitors at Divali and in workshops such as a Zulu dance experience. All children have

benefited from the school's inclusion project as they learn to appreciate that people have different talents and needs.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are given very high priority; teaching is very good and children achieve very good progress.
- Teaching is good for reading and writing. Children develop a good interest in books and stories but the early writing skills of the higher attaining and older children are not generally extended quite far enough.

Commentary

36. Most children start nursery with lower than expected language skills and a key focus of the nursery's provision is to tackle this barrier to learning. By the time children transfer to the reception class, most have average skills.
37. The strength of the teaching is the very good development of children's speaking and listening skills. Very engaging learning activities provoke good discussions and staff are adept at building on children's questions to provoke further discussion. When a familiar rhyme led children to question whether fish could bite, fish were brought into school from the supermarket to find the answer. Vocabulary is extended constantly as children and staff explore together, stretching their curiosity and knowledge about the world. Displays record some of the children's comments as they respond to activities and investigations, highlighting the value placed by staff on listening to children. Rhymes, songs and refrains are shared frequently, helping children to improve their pronunciation skills. Staff provide good models for clear speech and explanation.
38. The good range of books is used well to generate children's interest in stories and this sets children well on the way to understanding what can be gained from reading. Children are seen engrossed in books daily, turning pages carefully, examining the pictures and sharing memorised lines from stories that have been heard in family groups. Imaginative role-play situations help children to explore stories further. The children's clear understanding, for example, of likely events in stories about princesses, was evident in their detailed drawings and accompanying explanations. Very good teaching extends the children's thinking very effectively, encouraging descriptions of characters and devising further detail of events. Helped by a good range of games and activities, the older children can recognise their own name card, and sometimes those of others. Staff use written words within many activities to promote an understanding of print and, with help, some higher attaining children can recognise familiar words, such as 'mummy' or 'daddy'.
39. Children soon learn that print carries meaning and, through good encouragement and praise, they begin to make their own marks to convey meaning. One of the older children 'wrote' labels for the teacher's files on her table. However, not quite enough is done to promote

conventional writing skills. Too few of the children learn to write their name with confidence before they transfer to reception. Records show that the process is often too slow. Staff work successfully to help children to hear the sounds of words, through games or repeating rhyming words in stories. Children relished, for example, the sound of 'the fish on the dish'. Opportunities are missed to promote children's efforts by, for example, writing the letter or word under discussion, to promote a firm link between sounds and specific letter shapes. In this respect, staff do not always expect enough of higher attaining and older children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on developing mathematical language.
- Songs, rhymes and practical activities contribute well to children's understanding.
- There is a relative weakness in the development of early calculating skills, particularly for more able children who are about to transfer to reception.

Commentary

40. From below average skills when they start nursery, children achieve well because of good teaching, and the majority work at the level to be expected for their age by the time they transfer to the reception class.
41. The very good emphasis on mathematical language, whatever the activity, helps children to become comfortable with mathematical words and comparisons. Children are asked to describe, for example, the shape of the bread and the ham when making sandwiches. Counting skills are developed well through counting rhymes, and through practical activities such as counting the number of children in the group each session or paying for their pizzas in the imaginative play area outside. In a very good activity with a chosen focus group, the children learned to classify by sorting vegetables into different bags before counting how many vegetables there were altogether. However, this type of focused learning has only recently been introduced and is not planned for all children generally. Consequently, children's mathematical skills are not always developed systematically, to build on what they already know. While most children learn to count at least to ten and many recognise some numerals, the higher attaining children who are about to transfer to the reception class are not as advanced in early calculating skills as they might be.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very comprehensive range of activities helps children to develop a very good appreciation of the world around them.
- Children develop very good computing skills.
- Children benefit from a wide range of visits and visitors to school to extend their knowledge.

Commentary

42. Teaching is very good and so children achieve very well in this wide area of learning. The skills and understanding of the children are above the level that might be expected for their age as they transfer to the reception class.
43. A wealth of activities is planned both inside the nursery and in the outdoor areas to develop children's interest and appreciation of the world around them. They are encouraged to look closely at animals, such as snails and guinea pigs, and to learn to understand their needs. The very good sensory area established outside helps children to use all their senses to appreciate the qualities of different materials.
44. The school has shown that it places great importance on developing children's computing skills to help their learning in all areas. Work with a specialist ICT consultant has greatly enhanced teachers' confidence and improved their teaching in this aspect. Children are now comfortable with using the interactive whiteboard, which is available throughout the day, and are skilled in accessing and operating the program they want. Children with special educational needs who find it difficult to communicate achieve very well as they express themselves freely through the picture-making programs and they change their work at will.
45. The wide range of visits enhances children's learning significantly, as they experience, for example, a walk in the forest. Visitors to school, such as the person who brought a snake for them to see and touch and the Indian visitor who talked with them, extend children's awareness of the world and its cultural and religious diversity.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily use of a wide variety of large and small equipment, encompassing all areas of learning, develops children's control of movement very well.
- A very good range of physical activities is planned that give the children valuable opportunities to develop sports skills and creative dance.

Commentary

46. Teaching is very good. Children achieve very well and their attainments are better than expected as they transfer to the reception class. An abundance of irresistible activities helps the very good development of the children's manual skills. Paintbrushes, thick and fine pens and computerised whiteboards make learning to master the control of implements fun and children are confident in their use. Batting the net bags tied firmly to the 'washing line' uses plenty of energy and improves their aim. Staff set up appropriate challenges, such as jumping courses and bat and ball games, to promote good physical development and healthy exercise. Wheeled toys, large building blocks, climbing frames and balancing apparatus are in daily use. Indoor accommodation is generous in size and allows year-round use of large apparatus. Opportunities for dance show that, with very good teaching, higher attaining children especially learn to control their movements very well in time with music.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's philosophy of nurturing the children's individuality encourages their creative development and leads to very good achievement.
- The artist in residence in school this term has done much to promote methods of fostering children's creative skills.
- Music is part of daily life in the nursery and used very well for both management and enjoyment.
- The good social skills of most children mean that they use role-play settings very well to develop character parts and dialogue.

Commentary

47. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well. Visitors to the nursery, such as the artist in residence for a day every week for the whole term, extend the skills of both staff and children very well.
48. The school is adept at following children's interests and providing materials that promote their creative impulses. Children concentrate for long spells of time and work hard to complete drawings, paintings and constructions. The high value placed on their efforts and the interest shown encourage persistence and attention to detail. Children devising very large pictures of stories based on their own ideas began with quite simple drawings or lines but, through very constructive dialogue with staff, built up quite complex illustrations. Resources are very well organised and made easily accessible. This makes modelling and making an irresistible activity and children are seen working intently, for example on decorating clay with marks and a selection of protuberances.
49. The school is focused on improving its provision for creative development and the artist in residence provides excellent innovative inspiration for both staff and children. Her recent work enabled children to devise constructions from various materials, working within a beam of light that made shadows part of their work. Opaque and translucent materials added texture to the shadows and fascinated the children.
50. Music is part of daily life in the nursery and invigorating music heralds 'tidy time' each day. After all the effort, soothing music, such as compositions by Mozart, announces 'relax time' when children change moods and settle to a quiet activity with their family group. A newly devised arrangement means that a group of children with a notable talent for dance or musical instruments are sometimes taught separately, helping them to focus clearly on improving their skills. The very good teaching helps the children to quickly identify fast and slow music and to move to its rhythm. Donning layered net skirts raised the children's enthusiasm to high levels and helped them to manage the movement of their bodies well in time to the music.
51. Well equipped role-play activities, such as the Pizza shop, are extended well through adult intervention. Children working on their own benefit from their good social skills and many organise themselves and others very well. Much more dialogue 'in role' is evident in the 'home corner' than is expected for their age. Dressing-up clothes are carefully selected by staff and are in frequent use. Wooden hand-held masks are popular for re-enacting well-remembered stories, such as the Three Billy Goats Gruff.

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	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	4
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).