

INSPECTION REPORT

CLERVAUX NURSERY SCHOOL

Jarrow

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108661

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Hawkins

Lead inspector: Mike Onyon

Dates of inspection: 8th – 9th November 2004.

Inspection number: 266633

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: 3-4
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 36

School address: Clervaux Terrace
Jarrow
Tyne and Wear
Postcode: NE32 5UP
Telephone number: 0191 4897358
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of Mrs Whitehead
governors:

Date of previous 10th -11th May, 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is small nursery school with 36 children between the ages of three and four on roll. Children are admitted at the beginning of the term during which they reach their third birthday. Sixteen children are due to be admitted in January 2005. Most children come from the local area from mixed socio-economic circumstances. The attainment of children when they start school is at the levels expected of children of this age. All the children attend on a part-time basis. Most children are of white ethnicity, with one child at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Currently no children have been identified as having special educational needs. Five children are entitled to free school meals, which is around average. The school has received a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Eco-schools Award and the International School Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18146	Mike Onyon	Lead inspector	Personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; English as an additional language.
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
22805	Jo Greer	Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; creative development; special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a **very good** school that has some excellent features. As a result of very good teaching, the children achieve very well. Leadership and management are very good with very effective leadership by the headteacher. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's very good ethos strongly promotes very good relationships, developing children's independence, confidence and self-esteem.
- Children achieve very well in all of the areas of learning except mathematical development, where they achieve well.
- The curriculum is imaginative and innovative, with excellent opportunities provided for enrichment.
- Children's progress is carefully monitored and the next stages of learning planned very well.
- Resources are excellent and the accommodation is used very imaginatively to create a stimulating and purposeful learning environment. The outdoor classroom is an excellent resource.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well.
- The governing body is recently formed and needs to be better informed about the running of the school, enabling it to take a full part in determining its future.

The school has developed well since its inspection in 1999. The issue related to information and communication technology (ICT) identified at that time has been successfully addressed. The school now has up-to-date computers and good quality software. The school has begun to implement plans to ensure their more consistent use in all the areas of learning. The high standards of the previous inspection have been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good. The children's attainment when they join the school is average. Children of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well in all the areas of learning except mathematics, where they achieve well. They are already doing better than most children of their age and are on course to exceed the expected levels in communication, language and literacy; personal and social development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children's personal qualities are **very good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Children's behaviour is excellent and their attitudes are very good. Attendance is above average 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** overall, with very good teaching and learning observed throughout the school. All staff pay very good attention to boosting children's confidence and developing their independence through a range of very well planned and imaginative activities. In particular, very good opportunities are provided in the outdoor classroom. The school provides very good learning opportunities with many opportunities to enrich the curriculum provided through a range of very well planned visits.

The curriculum is further enriched through work associated with the environmental schools initiative (ECO), the healthy schools project and links with nursery schools in a number of European countries. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good; these children are very well supported and as a result they make very good progress in their learning. Assessment is used very well to plan children's future learning and adults know the children's strengths and weaknesses very well. The care provided for children is very good. The partnership with parents is very good and links with other schools and, in particular, the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good.

The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has brought together a hard-working and highly committed staff team. They share a vision for the continued future development of the school, offering all that is best for the children. Staff have very high aspirations for the children and are always looking for ways to improve. The management of the school is very good with all staff playing a full and effective part. The governing body for the school took up its responsibilities from September 1st, 2003. It does not yet have its full quota of members and current governors have had little preparation for their role. Under the guidance of the headteacher they carry out their duties in a satisfactory manner. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers are highly delighted with all aspects of the school's work and are very appreciative of the way the school supports them. They feel that their children enjoy coming to the school and make good progress in their learning. Children clearly enjoy participating in all that the school offers and are keen and interested learners.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide support and training to the governing body to enable them to take up their responsibilities effectively.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children achieve very well. They are doing much better than expected for their age in all areas of learning except mathematics, where they do better than expected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve very well.
- Because of well-planned learning opportunities and very good teaching children attain well above the expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; knowledge and understanding of the world; and their physical and creative development.
- Children attain above the expected levels in their mathematical development, where opportunities to use numbers in other areas of learning are not as well planned.

Commentary

1. The children's attainment when they start at the nursery is around the levels expected, but relatively weak in terms of their mathematical development. The very early identification of children who have difficulties with aspects of their learning enables support to be effectively targeted and put into place as soon as possible. As a result, children with special educational needs achieve very well. The school has a very small number of children who speak English as an additional language and very good provision enables them to progress at the same very good rate as their peers. Adults know the children very well and individual learning programmes are based on the very good observations of staff and a well-planned approach to individual learning. As a result all children achieve very well and parents are very pleased with their progress.
2. Children enter the nursery with skills appropriate to their age. They listen very well and settle into the well-ordered routines very quickly, feeling secure and happy in their learning environment. There is a consistent approach to the way that learning is organised, with children effectively encouraged and supported to plan their activities and to reflect upon them. As a result of careful instructions by staff and very good listening by the children, they move into a variety of activities quickly and enthusiastically.
3. In their personal, social and emotional development the children attain well above the expected level by the time they leave the nursery. The children relate well to each other; they are very sociable, independent and highly interested in all that they do. They demonstrate very good social interaction when working alongside their friends, often sensibly discussing what they are doing, and working together to find solutions to challenges. When they start school many children are in the early stages of using language to communicate. By the time they leave, they are confident enough to talk about their work, use a suitably broad vocabulary and make themselves understood. Many learning activities present very good opportunities to promote spoken language.

4. The children's attainment in mathematical development is above that expected by the time children leave the nursery. They have frequent opportunities to count through a variety of experiences, both indoors and outdoors, and are developing a good understanding of numbers. The children recognise shapes and use them, for example when building 'towers' with large-scale building blocks. They are able to describe the shapes in their immediate environment.
5. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very good and is considerably enhanced by a wide variety of first-hand experiences. The school uses its locality very well, with well-planned use of the grounds and several visits to places of interest. Opportunities for using numbers and counting could be better planned. Children's access to ICT has improved since the previous inspection and further learning opportunities are beginning through the use of recently acquired laptop computers and plans to site the computers in the learning areas, where they will be used more frequently.
6. In physical development, the children exceed the levels expected in many aspects of their work by the time they leave the nursery. They take advantage of the well-planned daily opportunities for running, jumping and climbing. As a result, their skills are very well developed. Fine motor skills such as holding and controlling pencils and brushes are also well developed. The children's attainment in creative development is well above the level expected and their learning is significantly enhanced by the very good range of materials provided for them to create vibrant and colourful pictures and models.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to learning are very good and behaviour is excellent. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. The school has made good improvement to behaviour and attendance since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's very good attitudes and outstanding behaviour help them to achieve very well.
- Children form excellent relationships with each other.
- Personal development is very good because there are so many chances for children to think about important things around them.
- Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good.

Commentary

7. Children show very high levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work. They are happy to be at school, concentrate very well and take pride in their achievements.

Example of outstanding practice

The following example illustrates the very high quality of children's behaviour, the result of excellent procedures and routines adopted in the school:

The children at this school are a credit to their parents and staff. Their self-control and discipline are

exemplary. For instance, at home time they sit on chairs, waiting for their parents to collect them – no fuss, no mischief. Because of the high expectations of teachers they are mature beyond their years at such times and behave like young business people waiting to collect their own children from school. Behaviour is also outstanding in lessons, during circle times, at playtimes and as children move around school. The school has achieved such standards of behaviour because staff take the time to explain the consequences of children's actions to them. The school has an excellent system of rewards to value acts of kindness and good behaviour. Because of the consistency of approach and children's clear understanding of expectations this school is completely free of bad behaviour and no child has ever been excluded.

8. The school promotes good relationships, including racial harmony, exceptionally well. Consequently, children play and work together in perfect harmony. For example, at story time they take turns to speak - happy to let others go first and listening respectfully to responses from their classmates. All parents replying to the questionnaire say that the school helps their children to become mature and independent for their age.
9. Spiritual development is very good. Circle time, where children are able to offer their comments whilst sitting together, offers opportunities in subjects such as science, literacy and history for children to marvel at the beauty of the world. They also think about events such as war. For instance, children recently held a remembrance celebration for those who sacrificed their lives and also observed a two-minute silence. Children have a very good sense of right and wrong. They often consider 'what is the right thing to do?' in many school and home situations. They consider how bad behaviour affects others, people's rights and animal rights. For instance, they recently learnt that even pests have a right to live and that people ought to be as tolerant as possible.
10. Children's social development is very good because staff are very good role models. Children know that they are part of a community. For instance, they help staff prepare learning resources for outdoor activities and are also keen to help tidy up after each lesson. Children have many opportunities to learn about their own culture through the curriculum. For instance, they recently took part in the St George's day celebration by marching in Jarrow. Children also learn much about other cultures in our multicultural society. For instance, the school celebrates the Chinese New Year and Eid festivals.
11. Secretarial staff maintain very detailed records of attendance and absence. The school promotes attendance very well by drawing children's attention to it. For instance, when all children are present they are asked to give themselves a clap and adults join in with the applause.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	12.5	School data	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the nursery is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. The curriculum is very good. The accommodation is very good and resources are excellent. The school offers very good care, guidance and support to the children. The

partnership with parents is very good and links with others schools and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment procedures are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very effective in promoting children's language development, independence and creativity.
- Adults interact very effectively with children during child-initiated activities so that children extend their knowledge, understanding and skills very well.
- Relationships are excellent so that children can learn effectively in a secure environment.
- Ongoing assessment is used very effectively so that teaching is planned to focus on children's individual needs and interests.
- Opportunities to use ICT are not sufficiently well exploited.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	0	0	0	0	0

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

12. Teaching by all teaching and support staff is of a consistently high standard. They are committed to providing a learning environment that is stimulating and enriching. Great care is taken to ensure that children feel safe and happy. The good ratio of adults to children means that children are fully engaged in all activities. Constant high quality conversation encourages children to extend their ideas and develop their speaking skills.
13. The very good interactions with adults as well as the individualised learning approach means that children with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and children who have special gifts or talents make the same very good progress as all other children in the school.
14. The very effective use of this approach means children take responsibility for their own activities, but adult interactions ensure that children learn and develop very effectively through their chosen play activities. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and children feel safe and secure in their learning areas, experiencing a wide range of opportunities. Careful monitoring ensures that children experience the full range of activities available and do not choose to concentrate on some activities and avoid others.
15. The large classroom and small group rooms are very well organised. Equipment and materials are very clearly labelled and displayed and easy for children to find. Children can choose the equipment they need and know where to return it when they tidy up. For example, most tools and equipment are labelled with pictures so children know where they belong. Brooms and mops have been shortened so children sweep up sand and mop spilt water at the end of sessions. Children are trained to wipe down tables themselves and put everything back where they found it. All this encourages independence and responsibility. The school plans to use recently acquired laptop computers in each of the learning areas to give children more access. The use of ICT has improved since the previous inspection and these plans aim to build upon the improvements.
16. All adults constantly carry out assessments of the progress made by the children, recording it both formally and informally. The information is regularly shared between adults to ensure that future activities effectively build on children's learning. Constant praise and the display of children's work also build their self-esteem. Adults encourage children to appreciate each other's work by showing it in circle time. All adults are constantly aware of incidental achievements by children, which are noted on record boards. These comments contribute to the planned learning objectives for subsequent play activities so that children are always building on what they know and can do. The incidental observations contribute to children's ongoing assessment records.

The curriculum

The curricular provision is very good with excellent enrichment opportunities. Accommodation is very good with excellent resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enrichment of the curriculum is excellent through the imaginative range of visits and activities provided.
- The curriculum very effectively meets the individual needs of all children.
- There are excellent resources for outdoor learning activities.
- Computers are not yet located in the learning areas and, as a result, children have limited access to them.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is very carefully planned to integrate all the areas of learning appropriate for children of this age. A rich variety of stimulating activities is carefully structured to interest and motivate children. Independence and responsibility are nurtured through regular, consistent routines maintained by all adults. Children plan their activities in small groups. Adults monitor these activities, interacting with children so they develop their play to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding.
18. Children are given very good opportunities to offer their views on a variety of topics through circle time, which is planned very effectively to develop children's imagination and sense of wonder. The very varied and frequent educational visits contribute exceptionally well to this aspect of children's development. For instance, the visit to Finchale Abbey was used very effectively to encourage children to imagine the life of monks. Children also listened to the Gregorian chants of the monks in an underground vault by the light of candles. The school's European links and the teaching of French add a further dimension to children's knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their immediate environment.
19. The outdoor 'classroom' provides an exceptionally rich opportunity to engage in growing all manner of plants, including fruit, vegetables and salads as well as shrubs and flowers. Children observe pond life, birds and small animal pets. There is a 'bandstand' for percussion instruments, a service garage and DIY area where children use real tools. The covered verandahs mean children enjoy physical activities such as climbing, balancing and sliding all year round. There are quiet areas for reflection and plenty of space for riding wheeled toys and pushing prams and buggies.
20. The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs where this is appropriate and necessary. The very good links with parents ensure that there is a joint and shared approach for all children so they may flourish in a safe, secure and stimulating environment.
21. The school plans to relocate computers from their current location, in a small room, designed for group teaching. The plans show that there will be more opportunities for children to experience ICT when the machines are moved into the main learning areas and integrated into the regular activities available for children.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for ensuring children's care, welfare, health and safety. It provides children with very good support and guidance. Their academic achievements are recorded well. The school values children very much and gives them very good chances to express their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are introduced to school life very well.
- They feel cared for because of the very good arrangements to ensure health and safety.
- Children's personal and academic development is monitored very well.
- Children form very good, trusting relationships with adults because of the school's very strong family ethos.

Commentary

22. Parents expressed considerable appreciation of the quality of care and guidance offered to their children. They are also very appreciative of the guidance and support offered to them, as parents. All new children are offered a home visit before starting. They are also given many chances to experience learning routines before they start. For instance, they can join in lessons and circle times. Toy and book libraries are also very helpful in giving children confidence in starting school life.
23. The designated adult for child protection is well trained and deals with any issues effectively. The school is looking to train more staff extensively as soon as the local education authority can accommodate this. General health and safety risk assessments are undertaken as required. Arrangements for first aid and fire procedures are very good. The school undertakes many initiatives as part of the 'Healthy School Award' and staff pay very good attention to health and safety in lessons. For instance, children are given very good guidance about using garden or classroom tools.
24. Staff know children very well because of the very good procedures to assess children's academic and personal development. Children's records are very detailed and information is very well used to inform lesson planning and target setting. Where necessary, the school works very closely with specialist agencies such as the special educational needs support service.
25. Children enjoy very good and trusting relationships with staff. This gives them confidence in turning to adults whenever they have any problems. Circle times are managed very well and children are given very good chances to express themselves.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very effective partnership with parents and very good links with other schools and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very good opportunities to express their views and make suggestions to the school.
- They are very well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress.
- Parents' involvement in their children's learning at school and at home is very good.
- Very good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum and support learning very well.

- Very good links with European schools support children's personal development.

Commentary

26. The headteacher and staff are very approachable and they are always pleased to discuss parental concerns. Specific questionnaires are sent to parents periodically and this helps to identify issues and enables parents to influence the school. For instance, the school recently asked about home visits and educational trips. The school established a parent/toddler group recently, following parents' suggestions.
27. Parents are very well informed about the school through a well-presented prospectus and very helpful newsletters. Weekly 'worksheets' are on display outside classrooms. They effectively give parents information about the curriculum. The video library is excellent. It contains a vast range of useful information and guidance. Children's annual reports are very good.
28. Many parent helpers give their time generously to the school. For instance, they help their children settle in and help staff with practical activities. Parents support their children's learning at home very well by listening to them read or talking with them about their learning. The school organises workshops regularly for parents in subjects such as numeracy, literacy and French. These are very helpful in encouraging parents to become even better involved in their children's learning.
29. The education business partnership supports the school very well; for instance, it has recently sponsored the 'seed to sow' project. Agencies such as the police, road safety officer and fire service regularly lead activities for children and this supports their understanding of the world and safety matters. Educational trips in the local community to places such as the local library, town centre, gardens, forests and castles also support learning very well. The school puts much back into the community. For instance, the school fundraises for several charities and good causes.
30. This school is involved in many initiatives with local and European schools. For instance, the school, a school in Denmark and an adjacent special school are working very closely together to maximize learning opportunities through the 'forest area' development. Visitors from European kindergartens (including Swedish and Norwegian) give children a unique insight of European school life and culture.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's leadership and management are very good. The leadership and management of key staff are very good. Governance is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher, with a very clear vision for the school, is a key factor in the success of the school.
- There is a very good team spirit and staff are totally committed to providing a very high quality education for all the children.

- The quality of education is monitored and evaluated very well, with the school continuously seeking improvement.
- Governors are supportive but do not yet play a sufficiently active role in monitoring the work of the school.

Commentary

31. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. She carries out her duties in a highly effective manner, with a determination to offer all that is best to the children, their parents and the community. She leads by example and is keen to retain involvement in teaching and to work alongside her colleagues in the classroom. Her commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity can be seen in all that she does. She is innovative and creative in the way that she seeks to take the school forward. She has played a significant role in building relationships with nursery schools in a number of European countries, seeking and sharing good practice. As a result the school gained the International Schools Award. She leads a highly successful team of individuals who share her desire to offer the best possible for the children. The team spirit in the school is very good, with individuals able to lead learning very well, taking responsibility for major areas of the school's work. For example, a teacher and nursery nurse have worked tirelessly to provide a healthy environment and to gain the Healthy Schools Award. The principles of the work are seen in a number of activities, enabling the children, and their parents, to have very good knowledge of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.
32. All members of staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which they discharge very effectively. There are very good procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. Careful consideration is given to the impact upon individual children. Lessons learned from the monitoring are quickly applied to ensure ongoing improvements. The leadership and management of special educational needs, and provision for children whose first language is not English, are very good and ensure that support is given where the need is greatest. This enables the children to take a full and active role in all that the school offers.
33. The governance of the school is satisfactory. A governing body was formed in September 2003, and is yet to have its full complement of members. Governors are supportive of the school and are kept well informed by the headteacher. They carry out their statutory duties in a satisfactory manner and a number are parents whose children have attended the school. However, governors do not play an active enough role in the strategic management and development planning of the school, or holding the school to account for the quality that it provides. More support and training needs to be offered to enable them to fully engage with the school. The school development plan accurately outlines the areas the school needs to address to improve further, with a focus upon improved children's access to ICT. All staff contribute fully to determining educational priorities, but governors are not yet sufficiently involved in this aspect of the school's work.
34. The school has only recently received a delegated budget, so the usual finance table has not been included in this report. With the benefit of support from the local education authority, it is establishing procedures to monitor spending patterns and to

gain best value from decisions about expenditure. Good procedures have been put into place and day-to-day administration and financial management undertaken by the school clerks are of a high standard. The school provides very good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have a very good understanding of systems and routines.
- Children demonstrate very high levels of concentration and perseverance.
- The very good opportunities for children to be imaginative and creative contribute much to their personal development.
- The children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

35. Most of the children are on course to achieve well beyond the level expected for their age in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. Very good teaching and learning ensure that children of all abilities achieve very well from their different starting points. No opportunity is missed during the day for promoting the children's social skills; for example, by introducing them to the social conventions associated with eating meals together, playing games, taking turns and considering the feelings of others.
36. From the beginning of their time in the nursery, all adults set very high expectations to which the children willingly respond. Independent learning skills are quickly encouraged as the children put away resources, choose equipment and activities and attend to their own personal hygiene needs. The children observed during the inspection had only been in the nursery for four weeks but displayed considerable maturity when considering the choices available to them. They are given a great deal of flexibility in terms of selecting the activities they pursue during the course of their morning or afternoon session, and make sensible choices.
37. Because of the very good quality of teaching, the activities in all the areas of learning are equally stimulating, and as a result, hold considerable appeal for the children. They concentrate very well in planning their choice of activity, with adult support and encouragement, and show very good levels of concentration and perseverance in their chosen activities. Their creative work gives children the opportunities to demonstrate very good levels of imagination and originality. In role play activities, such as when the children used the 'house' area, there were very good levels of social interaction as they assumed their roles and took on different characters.
38. The children know the routines of their session very well and follow them with little fuss and considerable maturity. The meeting areas for groups of children are identified by a colour and help to give the children a 'group identity', making it easy for them to find their friends for small group sessions. The children's behaviour is excellent and they have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. All

adults build the children's confidence and self-esteem at every opportunity, and children know that their efforts are valued.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children of all abilities achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- Adults use every opportunity to develop children's speaking skills.
- Adults act as very good role models for children's developing language skills.

Commentary

39. Children begin nursery with very different levels of language skills. From the beginning children are surrounded by talk. There are opportunities in the large group circle time to join in with action songs and rhymes. They are encouraged to listen to one another. Adults repeat children's comments back to them to encourage good articulation and pronunciation and to extend single-word or short-phrase statements and answers.
40. In small group sessions, each child is given an opportunity to make a contribution. Teachers are aware that shy children are often more forthcoming in small groups than in the larger circle group. When children make their 'plans' for the activity sessions, probing questions by the teacher encourage children to describe in detail how they will use a particular resource. For example, if a child opts to paint, they will be asked what they want to paint, which colours they will choose, and what might be in the picture. In all their activities adults constantly reinforce children's spoken language by encouraging them to talk about their work, through probing questions.
41. The exceptionally varied and rich extended curriculum provides many opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and expressive language through the introduction of new experiences and ideas. Children can make marks to indicate what they wish to say, with many beginning to form letters and short words in their writing. They recognize their names as they enter school at the beginning of each session and talk to each other and adults about the stories they hear and the characters in them. Story time is also used very effectively to introduce children to new ideas and feelings.
42. All children make very good progress, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those who start school with an above average language skill. By the end of the nursery year most children have achieved levels well above those expected for their age and are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The numeracy course for parents is very effective in supporting children's learning.
- Because of good teaching children achieve well.
- Good use is made of many opportunities to give children practice in counting.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are good. Adults make use of many incidental opportunities to practise counting forwards and backwards. At the time of the inspection, almost all children could already show up to five fingers correctly and count them accurately. They enjoyed singing rhymes involving counting backwards from five by taking one away each time, such as blowing leaves off a tree. They were given tasks involving small numbers to reinforce their number knowledge. For example, each child was asked to collect three different leaves. Children were later asked to show their biggest leaf, their smallest leaf and to match leaves of similar colour or shape.
44. When children were using construction blocks they were asked to compare sizes and heights and to compare their large towers with their own height. They were excited to see how deep the holes were dug to accommodate the newly arrived mature trees to be planted in their own forest. This was done by standing inside the hole. They also discovered how many children could fit inside the hole. It all caused great excitement, but was also a valuable learning experience. Many opportunities to count, to recognise numbers and shapes, and to talk about mathematics arise from other activities. A clearer focus upon these activities would enable children to do as well as they do in the other areas of learning.
45. Tidying away at the end of activity sessions also involves matching shapes and colours because hooks for all tools and equipment are labelled with the outline shape of each object. Large building blocks are placed on two-dimensional coloured shapes, introducing children to careful observation of shape. There are very good resources in the designated small mathematics room to promote number recognition, counting, shape and pattern. Children make good progress so that by the end of the nursery year most achieve well for their age and in relation to their prior attainment.
46. A particularly impressive feature is the parents' numeracy course, which introduces parents to the different aspects of mathematical development, so that they can support their children at home using normal domestic objects and through games which they make. This contributes very well to children's learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have access to a very wide range of very good activities, including many well-planned visits to places of interest. This very effectively promotes their observational and enquiry skills.
- The outdoor classroom is an excellent resource, which is used well to support children's learning.
- The school's involvement in external initiatives, such as the International Schools, ECO Schools and Healthy Schools awards, has a very good impact on the children's learning.
- Since the previous inspection children are using computers more. The school is now locating laptops in the learning areas to further improve access for the children.

Commentary

47. Much of the children's learning occurs through their involvement in the many very good quality structured and 'free play' activities that are on offer throughout their time in school. The resources for this area of learning are very good and materials well arranged and clearly labelled to enable easy access for the children. The children's learning is enhanced significantly by a very good range of visits to places of interest that broaden their experience, and reinforce the learning that takes place in school. Adults make very good use of the journey time to engage children in discussion about their surroundings, pointing out interesting features in the landscape, and drawing attention to particular features that are the focus of the visit. Photographic and written records of the visits show high levels of curiosity, demonstrating that the children are keen to take an active part in all that is on offer. During the inspection children were excited by the delivery of large trees for planting in the neighbouring special school grounds. They keenly observed the holes being dug and the first tree being planted. Very good use is made of the outdoor classroom for promoting the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, the children happily investigated the 'digging and growing' area, collecting leaves and counting them successfully.
48. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well as the result of very well planned opportunities. Teaching and learning are interesting and activities challenging. Planning is very good with many opportunities for children to explore their indoor and outdoor environment. The children have access to a very wide choice of activities and adults make the activities as interesting and exciting as possible. For example, the children visited Seaburn beach and Souter lighthouse, where they met and talked to 'the man on stilts', and 'the hedgehog'. Their visit to Finchdale Priory enabled them to explore the site, looking for shapes in the rocks and buildings. Very good on-going discussion helps to develop the children's vocabulary, and to ensure that they have a good understanding of new concepts. Because of the school's work linked to the International School award, the children have a very good awareness of children in other countries. During the inspection two groups of children were observed conversing in elementary French, encouraged and supported by a teacher. The Healthy School award has given them a good insight into the need for eating healthy foods and taking regular exercise.
49. In their use of ICT, the children's attainment is at the expected level for their age. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. The school has improved its provision since the previous inspection and currently houses a group of three computers in a small room, close to one of the children's group meeting rooms. Groups of children now use them regularly and are taught basic skills by a visiting teacher of ICT. Additional laptops have recently been purchased with the intention of improving opportunities for individuals to access computers during their other activities. Most children confidently use the mouse to move the cursor accurately around the screen. They use listening centres well and independently listen to music on tape recorders and CD-players.
50. The small construction and large construction areas are popular choices for many children, and they use the building blocks in an imaginative way to create towers and other structures. During the inspection a number of children used large three-dimensional shapes to build towers that were 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' the

teacher. They talked about the colours and the size of the blocks, with the teacher effectively encouraging them to construct a secure structure. Children were also observed demonstrating good levels of manual dexterity when putting together small building block pieces to make 'houses'.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor classroom is used very well to develop children's learning.
- Teaching is very good and is very effective in developing children's physical skills and independence.
- Resources are of very good quality.

Commentary

51. A significant strength of the provision for physical development is the large well-equipped outdoor play area, which forms a large part of the outdoor classroom. The area is used regularly throughout the day and provides an exciting and challenging learning environment. The children enjoy playing outside, whatever the weather. There are imaginatively laid out climbing frames, under the cover of a verandah roof, and a very good range of wheeled toys. Children climb, balance and move around the play area with very high levels of confidence, and show very good awareness of space and the needs of others. The children's stamina and physical skills are developed well as they move around on large wheeled toys or push one another on a variety of bikes, trolleys and scooters. The very good teaching encourages children to be adventurous in their physical pursuits but aware of the need for health and safety.
52. Indoors there is a considerable range of activities geared towards enhancing the children's physical development. The children develop fine motor skills well through taking part in many painting activities, model making and construction activities. A very good example was seen during the inspection where children were painting pictures of poppies, after discussing 'Poppy Day' in their circle time. Their pictures contained considerable detail and they mixed colours well to represent their chosen effect. Many activities are stimulating and skills such as cutting or handling a paintbrush are taught in a direct manner, when necessary, by adults. A regular feature of indoor work is a weekly 'keep-fit' session, thoroughly enjoyed by the children. They had many opportunities to move to music, shaking, twisting and stretching, following a story led by the teacher. The session effectively included a warm-up, followed by activities and then warm-down. Many children were able to comment about the effect that exercise was having on their body; for example, "I feel hot", "I am out of breath."
53. Teaching is very good. Adults are encouraging and provide very good levels of challenge, being well aware of the needs of individual children. They have skill and patience to know when children can make their own decisions and when to intervene. Many children reach standards well beyond those expected of children of this age and they achieve very well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given freedom to use, in their own way, a wide range of very good resources.
- Resources and opportunities for developing their imagination are excellent.
- Children concentrate and persevere very well.

Commentary

54. Children achieve very well because of the excellent opportunities provided for them and the very good teaching and learning. The quality and range of musical instruments are better than those usually found in nursery schools. They provide children with experience of different materials, such as wood blocks and steel drums. Children explore pitch and rhythm. The outdoor 'classroom' includes a bandstand where children play different cymbals, bells and rattles. Children learn many action songs, which they sing very well and in tune.
55. There is a very good range of collage material and good opportunities to use paint. Children are encouraged to describe their 'paintings' and observe what happens when they mix colours by chance, as when a little boy put blue on top of yellow and was amazed to see green – 'magic!' said the teacher. Several children produced recognisable flowers – a poppy for Remembrance Day and a tree for their new forest. A very good feature was when an adult produced her own painting alongside the children – modelling skills for them to observe. Children are free to create collages and use modelling clay in their own way without adult interference, but with encouragement. All their efforts receive encouraging praise, and are often shared with other children in circle time, and displayed for all to see.
56. Both indoors and outside there are good opportunities for role play. There is an exceptionally well-resourced large home corner, many small world toys, an outdoor service garage and attractive places for story time – an old rowing boat and a special garden corner. The very many carefully thought-out educational visits, such as the visit to Finchale Abbey mentioned earlier, are chosen to develop children's imagination.
57. A particularly impressive occasion was the sensitive way in which the meaning of poppies for Remembrance Day was introduced and children practised keeping silent while they were invited to think about soldiers who had died in wars. All these opportunities also contribute extensively to children's language development and aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world around them, especially spiritual development and aesthetic awareness. As a result, children make very good progress and achieve well above expectations for their age.

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	3
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	1
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	1
Accommodation and resources	2
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	2
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).