

COLUMBIA MARKET NURSERY SCHOOL

Bethnal Green, London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100884

Headteacher: Patricia Wallson

Lead inspector: Joy Richardson

Dates of inspection: 23-24 November 2004

Inspection number: 266655

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:	92
School address:	Columbia Road Bethnal Green London
Postcode:	E2 7PG
Telephone number:	020 7739 4518
Fax number:	020 7729 8635
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Ian Mason
Date of previous inspection:	15 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The nursery has 92 children on roll. Sixty-two attend full time and 27 are part time. Children join the nursery from the age of three. They transfer to local primary schools in September or January before they are five. Most families live locally, but some come from further afield. A large proportion of families live in flats without gardens. There has been significant regeneration in the area, attracting people from a mix of backgrounds. Eligibility for free school meals is just above the average nationally. The nursery has a very diverse intake. A third of children are of white British or European heritage. Around a quarter come from the well-established Bangladeshi community in the area. A quarter have black African or Caribbean heritage. Many of the children are bilingual. More than a third speak a home language other than English, and a quarter are at an early stage in acquiring the language. A large minority of children speak Bengali, but 18 languages in all are spoken by the families of children in the nursery. A number of children have special educational needs, mainly related to speech and communication difficulties. Children start in the nursery with widely varying levels of skills. Overall, attainment on entry is below the expectation for this age, and well below in the development of English language skills. The school won a School Achievement Award in 2002. Plans are in hand for the development of a Children's Centre on the site.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6676	Joy Richardson	Lead inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development Special educational needs
32670	Graham Saltmarsh	Lay inspector	
16760	Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Creative development English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good nursery school. Children achieve very well in their learning and personal development. The school is led and managed very effectively and teamwork is very strong. Teaching is good and the quality of care for every child is very high. The school's links with parents and the wider community are excellent. **The school gives very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is very well led and intent on evaluating and improving its practice.
- Excellent links with parents, families and the community extend all-round support for children.
- The school is welcoming and inclusive, making very good provision to meet individual needs.
- The school provides a wide range of interesting and exciting opportunities for learning.
- The staff work very effectively to extend children's skills in speaking and listening.
- Learning is not extended as far as possible in some areas of the curriculum.

The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection in March 1999. There has been significant progress in the use of assessment, to extend learning appropriately for all children. The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is much improved. The school is now more rigorous in evaluating its practice and planning for improvement, making effective use of research to help it do this. The school has also extended the expertise of staff in developing children's language skills and helping bilingual learners. It has built on its partnership with parents and other agencies in the community, in order to give children the best possible start to their education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is very good overall. This is seen in the progress they make towards the goals which children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Children achieve very well in communication, language and literacy in English. Although standards in this area are below average overall, because many children start from a low base in their English language skills, children make very good progress because of effective teaching. Children also achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, and in physical development, and are doing well for their age in these areas of learning. In mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, children achieve well and are broadly on course to reach the goals for the end of reception. The school monitors children's progress very carefully along the 'stepping stones' in each area of learning. It uses this information to evaluate progress from term to term, to plan the next steps in learning, and to identify aspects of the curriculum which need more attention.

Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Children enjoy coming to school. They are eager to explore activities across the nursery and in the outdoor 'garden', and proudly demonstrate their skills. Children generally behave very well, responding positively to the school's clear and consistent expectations and routines. They learn to make choices, to co-operate, and to consider others. Attendance and punctuality are very good overall, and the school works closely with parents to achieve this.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The teaching is good overall, and there is some very good teaching, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Skilled teaching to develop speaking and listening helps the learning of all children,

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including those who are at an early stage in learning English, and those who have speech and communication difficulties. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants work very effectively together in planning interesting activities, considering individual needs, and engaging children in purposeful learning. The curriculum is very good and much enriched by extensive opportunities for outdoor learning. Visits out of school, special events, and visitors who share their expertise, all add to children's knowledge and interest in learning, and the involvement of families. The school provides a very high quality of care. The children are very well known as individuals and they thrive in a safe and supportive environment. The staff take great care in settling children into the nursery and they work very closely and flexibly with parents in doing this. Links with parents and with other partners in the community are exceptional, and this is a major strength of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership, valuing and guiding the efforts of the whole staff team, and seeking the best for each child. Support for children with special educational needs, and for those who are learning English as an additional language, is very well led and managed. The school evaluates its own performance, drawing on insights from research, and from its own monitoring processes in order to refine its practice and develop the expertise of staff. Governance is good. Governors give the school strong support and are extending their oversight of its performance. The school is very well run and communications are very good. Financial management is very effective in helping the school to achieve its aims.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and children love this school. Parents express a very high level of satisfaction with their children's nursery education. They strongly appreciate the way that the school works with them to provide a seamless transition for their children between home and school. Parents respect the knowledge and expertise of the staff and the way that this is shared with them. Most are pleased with the information they receive about their children's progress. Parents and carers, of all ethnic and language backgrounds, feel welcomed and involved in school life. They say that their children benefit from the rich diversity of language and culture which is represented within the school, and actively celebrated. Parents value highly the opportunities for outdoor learning and physical activity which the school provides, and which the children so evidently enjoy.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

To build on its many strengths the school should further develop children's learning in aspects of the curriculum by:

- extending learning about the sounds which make up words;
- promoting more mathematical thinking within activities;
- enriching role play about stories and familiar experiences;
- building on children's curiosity about the natural world.

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PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

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Achievement is very good overall. In relation to the early learning goals for the end of reception, standards are below average in communication language and literacy although children achieve very well. In personal and social development and physical development, achievement is very good and children are on course to exceed the early learning goals. In mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, children achieve well and are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children, including those who are bilingual, achieve very well in developing speaking and listening skills.
- Achievement is very good in the area of personal, social and emotional development.
- Children's physical skills develop very well in the course of their activities.
- Children with special educational needs make very good progress towards their targets.

Commentary

1. The school tracks children's progress from the start, and the level of children's acquisition of English is carefully assessed. The evidence collected by the school on entry shows that some children have skills, across the areas of learning, which are well advanced for their age, but most do not. Many children, including the majority of those whose home language is not English, and others who have speech and language difficulties, are at a very early stage in using English for communication.
2. The school works hard to extend children's competence in speaking and listening, and to build the skills of those who are learning English as an additional language. It has participated in an oral language research project in recent years and has amended its practice in the light of research findings. Staff focus closely on spoken language within planned group sessions, and in the course of activities, to extend children's skills. Foundations are well laid in literacy, and there is a growing emphasis on learning about the sounds which make up words. Although standards overall are lower than average in communication, language and literacy, children are achieving very well in catching up with expectations for their age. The progress of bilingual children is monitored termly and this shows that many make very good progress in understanding and using English.
3. The school fosters children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively. As a result, children achieve very well in this area of learning during their time in the nursery. They learn to concentrate and to sustain interest in activities. Many become very absorbed and involved in what they are doing. They make choices for themselves and develop independence and self-confidence. Children gain self-control and awareness of others, understanding and abiding by simple rules and routines. They form good relationships with trusted adults and begin to interact with other children in playing together.
4. Children are encouraged to practise physical skills and to handle tools and materials confidently. Children enjoy the freedom to explore the garden and they persist in challenges which involve climbing, jumping and balancing. They learn to co-ordinate hand and eye, for example in playing with bats and balls, and in writing, drawing, cutting and sticking. Children

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achieve very well in their physical development, and develop skills which are good for their age.

5. In mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, children achieve well. In these areas of learning, children reach standards broadly in line with expectations for their age, in terms of progress towards the early learning goals. The school's assessment procedures are showing up aspects within these areas of learning where progress is uneven, and is planning to amend its provision.
6. Children with special educational needs achieve very well in making progress towards the targets set for them. This is because teaching and support are tailored to the needs of each individual, and children's progress is regularly discussed and reviewed. The school identifies children with gifts and talents in particular areas, and is successfully exploring ways of challenging them further.
7. Children who are learning English as an additional language achieve very well overall, because of the very good teaching and support they receive. Although their English is delayed to begin with, in comparison with those speaking English as a first language, most of them make very good progress in speaking and listening. They do as well as their peers in other areas of learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The promotion of children's all-round development is a major strength. Children's attitudes to their school, their relationships with each other and with adults, and their behaviour in class and around the school are all very good. The school fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Attendance and punctuality are generally very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children love this school and enjoy to the full the activities and experiences it offers.
- Very good attitudes and behaviour contribute to effective learning.
- The school sets high expectations of the children and they respond with pleasure and pride.

Commentary

8. Children enjoy the nursery and are enthusiastic about the activities it provides for them. Parents told the inspectors that children settle in happily to school and want to be there as much as possible. Children are very keen to do well and to please the staff who work with them, and they readily help each other. This was seen, for instance, in a story session when a child quietly assisted another in identifying the creatures illustrated in the story.
9. At the start of the day, most children settle very quickly with eager anticipation and questions about what their day at school will bring for them. They show a strong degree of personal independence in making choices about what they would like to do and, with adult support, they readily try new activities. They become absorbed in well-structured tasks, often playing alongside others and sometimes collaborating with them. They enjoy participating in group sessions with an adult. Children respond well to expectations in taking on small responsibilities. For example, they show pride and a sense of achievement in clearing away after play sessions, and following the routines for meal times.
10. Children's behaviour is very good and they generally respond quickly to reminders, for example about sharing with others, or not running indoors. Parents are very positive about the behaviour, attitudes and social skills which the school fosters and which they say also carry over at home. Outside activities are safe and interesting, and children play in a friendly and

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calm fashion. They know what to do and who to turn to if they have any difficulty. The staff have clear and consistent expectations. The children feel secure in a caring community where everyone is treated with respect and courtesy. The children develop good relationships with all the adults in the school community, taking pleasure, for example, in a daily greeting from the premises manager.

11. Children are inquisitive and interested in all that goes on around them. They are very proud of their school and like to tell visitors what they have been doing and where they have been. The school expands children's horizons through imaginative visits and by welcoming many visitors. The school values and draws upon the rich cultural diversity of its families and the local community. Many events take place in school which celebrate the cultures, traditional dress, food and main religious festivals of parents and local people from varied backgrounds.
12. There is no national comparative data for attendance at nursery schools, but the school's attendance rate of over 90 per cent is above the borough average for children of nursery age. The school monitors attendance closely, emphasising the importance of consistent routines for children and establishing good attitudes for the future. Parents are discouraged from taking their holidays in term time and they generally respond positively. There are very few late arrivals and time is allowed for parents to speak with staff about any concerns. The school negotiates with parents about the settling-in period which children need, and children's readiness to attend full time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Children are well taught, and very good use is made of assessment to help children learn. The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum. The high quality of care, and extremely good links with parents and the community, also contribute to giving children a very good start to their education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very effective in building children's communication and language skills.
- Staff work together very well as a team, to ensure that teaching is purposeful and well planned.
- Assessment is used very well to track progress and to plan the next steps in learning.
- Teaching and support are very skilfully tailored to children's individual needs.
- Children's learning could be extended further in some areas.

Commentary

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Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	12	2	0	0	0

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

13. The school has refined its practice in teaching in the light of evaluations from observations and external research. Staff have developed very effective strategies to build on and extend children's language skills. For example, they often describe what children are doing, supplying

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a commentary which enhances understanding. In small group sessions, staff work to develop vocabulary and comprehension. Regular story times link pictures, words and actions. Very good use is made of props, such as puppets and models of animals, to make connections between language and meaning. Bilingual story sessions help children whose home language is Bengali to develop their understanding of English words and concepts. Work on rhymes and sounds within words, such as children's names, helps children to listen and recognise patterns in the way that words are built. The school is planning to extend this work further.

14. The staff meet regularly to plan and evaluate their work. They consider the learning to be drawn from activities, and the way that they can be adapted to meet the needs of individual children. Staff are very clear about their responsibilities for areas and activities, and they interact well with children to lead learning forward. 'Focus activities' directed by adults are planned well to extend specific learning. Children move confidently through the nursery, choosing activities in the classrooms and in the garden. Staff are alert to children who need support in trying new activities, and help and encourage them to practise new skills. In a daily meeting after school, staff evaluate activities and what children learned, and use this information to plan the next day.
15. Children are frequently observed during activities and this builds up a picture of their learning which is shared with parents, and related to the 'stepping stones' towards the early learning goals. In turn, this assessment is used very well to pinpoint the next steps in learning for individual children, and to tailor activities accordingly. The school uses information from assessment to build an overview of progress in each area of learning, and is beginning to map aspects of the curriculum which need more attention.
16. Teaching to promote mathematical development is effective in extending children's skills in counting, and their understanding of shape. The use of numbers for simple calculations is not strongly developed within activities, and children do not often pursue mathematical activities on their own. Staff provide many opportunities for role play, but these are not always elaborated richly with resources to prompt the replaying of experiences and the acting out of stories.
17. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who works in the school on one day a week, helps the whole staff to develop understanding of individual needs and the teaching strategies which are effective in meeting them. This is very helpful and is reflected in the very good teaching which these children receive. A learning support assistant works effectively with children with high levels of need, often within a group. All the staff are aware of the targets in individual education plans and how to support children in working towards them. Groups are organised with care so that special attention can be given, for example, to helping specific children extend their attention span, or learn to name colours.
18. The teaching of children who are learning English as an additional language is very good overall. There is a strong emphasis for all children on the promotion of speaking and listening skills. Children learning English receive regular extra sessions of tuition from the specialist teacher, in small groups, on one day a week. She also supports children during activities, and provides advice to teachers, nursery nurses and assistants for working towards children's individual learning targets. The bilingual nursery nurse, who speaks English and Bengali, gives extra tuition and ongoing support throughout the week, helping children to make progress in learning. Many members of staff acquire a few phrases in the more common home languages to help children, and outside help is available to the school when the need arises.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good overall. It is enriched very well through extra activities. The school's accommodation and resources are good.

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Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes sure that every child has full access to all curricular opportunities.
- The school extends learning very well through outdoor activities.
- The children gain much from a wide range of visits, visitors and special events.
- The school is continuing to review and develop its curriculum very well.

Commentary

19. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and appropriately based on the designated Foundation Stage programme. It is organised on a workshop system that offers a wide variety of choices. The children have access to all the activities in the three nursery classrooms and in the well-planned outdoor area. There is a good balance between free activities and those that are led by adults. The provision of support for children who are learning English as an additional language, and for those with special educational needs, is very good. The organisation of the curriculum gives a strong emphasis to oral language, and includes two small-group sessions a week for every child. The provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good, and well matched to children's needs both on a group and on an individual basis. Every child is helped and encouraged to take advantage of the full range of opportunities offered by the school.
20. The school is continuing to review and develop its curriculum, and to implement innovation, and is doing this very well. There is clear recognition of where it could improve further in some minor aspects of organisation and areas of learning, and these are already identified in the school improvement plan. There is very good enrichment through special events, by visitors, and by visits to places of special interest. Examples of some of these extra activities include the Eid party, a carnival day, a teddy bears' picnic, visits of the police and the fire service, and visits to the Tate Galleries, the Science Museum, and the Post Office. All this enrichment adds to children's knowledge and experience, and families enjoy being involved too.
21. Teachers and nursery nurses are appropriately qualified, and the balance of experience on the staff is good. Assistants are well trained and share in the school's programme of in-service training for teachers and nursery nurses. They have all received training recently in the oral language programme which the school is implementing. Members of the support staff make a valuable contribution to the quality of children's education, and the scope of the curriculum.
22. The school's accommodation is good overall, with excellent outdoor facilities. There is a spacious and interesting garden with wooded and hilly areas and pathways. A large area, with direct access from the classrooms, has been recently roofed over to extend opportunities for all-weather outdoor play. The garden gives children the space and freedom to explore and to enjoy physical activity, as well as a wide range of other activities. It provides valuable opportunities for children to appreciate and experience the natural world. The building is well maintained, and attractive and colourful throughout. Though the premises are generally spacious, the library area is small and not centrally sited, rather limiting its use. Resources are generally good overall, however, and of good quality and variety. They are also easily accessible, both to staff and to children.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures children's care, welfare, health and safety very effectively. It monitors children's achievements and personal development very well, providing very good support, advice and guidance, and attending very well to children's views.

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Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very caring environment which is reassuring for children and parents.
- There is a very strong community ethos, marked by trust, respect and concern for everyone.
- Children's progress is very well monitored and guided.

Commentary

23. The children are provided with a very caring and supportive environment. All staff know the children well. They are alert to any signs of distress and are quick to give help. Assessment and monitoring are consistent and very comprehensive, identifying where support and guidance are needed. Children have the security of meeting regularly with the teacher and support staff in their home-base. The school is planning to strengthen oversight further by allocating a 'key worker' for each child.
24. Health and safety arrangements across the entire school site are very good. Thorough maintenance ensures that the building and school equipment are safe. Fire and evacuation procedures are particularly good. The physical security of the building, environs and perimeters are very good. There are plans shortly to replace one ageing and rusting perimeter fence, which is nonetheless secure. The school garden and outside equipment are kept in very good condition. Staff are vigilant to ensure that children are carefully supervised and safe at all times. Accidents are rare and any problems or difficulties relating to safety in the school are immediately addressed.
25. Child protection procedures are fully in place and staff are well aware of their responsibilities. The school has very close relationships with all the local care agencies. Parents trust and have confidence in the staff to do the best for their children. They praise the high quality of care provided and the school's concern for children's health and safety.
26. Children are encouraged to eat healthy and nutritious food. They bring fruit into school which is shared and eaten each day, and fresh water is always available. Children always wash their hands before meals. Lunch is an enjoyable and social occasion, and children are encouraged to choose and try new foods, and to practise good table manners.
27. The school monitors children's learning and personal development very well. Staff, regularly observe children, in order to assess their progress. These observations contribute to the planning of support and guidance for individuals, and help to develop a shared understanding of children's learning. There is mutual respect between children and adults, and respect for children's feelings. The school listens to and takes account of children's views. The school has a simple exit questionnaire for children, which it uses to evaluate the experience a child has had whilst at the school.
28. The support for children with special educational needs is very effective. The school pays close attention to concerns about children's progress and development, and works closely with parents in order to provide well targeted help. All staff are well informed about children's individual needs and agreed ways of meeting them.
29. Children with English as an additional language are assessed for their levels of English acquisition on entry to the nursery. Regular assessments are made of their progress, in observations of activities, as well as more formally every term. The specialist teacher, together with the home-base teachers, carries this out using a locally provided scheme which identifies stages in learning. These assessments are used effectively to structure future steps in learning English, and planning across all the areas of learning. All members of staff are aware of the needs of bilingual children and give them plenty of encouragement and help, enabling their confidence to develop. The school supports children who are learning English as an additional language very well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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Partnership with parents and the local community are excellent. This has a very positive impact on the quality of education and care provided for children. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's partnership with parents is exceptionally effective.
- Excellent induction procedures help children and parents to settle into the school community.
- Outstanding community and business links enrich daily life at the school.

Commentary

30. Parents are delighted with this school. A high proportion expressed their views before or during the inspection and most gave the school high praise for every aspect of its provision. Parents have every confidence in the headteacher and staff and believe the teaching to be good. They are appreciative of the support the school gives to them and their families as well as their children. Particular gratitude was expressed for the school's exceptional care and concern for families at times of great stress.
31. Parents consider the school to be a safe and caring place where the interests of their children are paramount. They appreciate the wide programme of weekly workshops at the school on matters relating to children's learning, health and welfare, and these are well attended. Parents are actively involved in helping the school, participating in visits and a wide range of school functions and activities. They help to organise social and fundraising events, such as a summer fair, which provides a focus for the whole community.
32. Induction procedures are comprehensive and reassuring for parents and children. Home visits, by a teacher and nursery nurse, are relaxed and the staff take time to explain and discuss every aspect of the child's start to school life. Subsequent transition arrangements to primary schools in the area are equally thoughtful and reassuring.

Example of outstanding practice

The school has produced an excellent video to show what life is like in the nursery. This is shown to parents during the home visit. The presentation is based on the commentary of a spaceman opening a hatch and 'Letting go'. It puts its message across with a light touch, introducing many aspects of life and learning at the school. It explains what goes on in simple language, from the perspective of parents and children. The school offers the film on a DVD that can be played on a laptop computer and the commentary is being made available in Bengali, one of the main home languages of children in the school, as well as in English. The film shows that starting in the nursery will be fun, and helps parents to prepare themselves and their children for this new adventure.

33. The school has an open door policy towards parents and carers at all times. The headteacher and her staff are always available to discuss any matters of concern. New parents are invited into the school informally to meet the staff and other parents. Friendly welcomes are extended to all members of the family, and time is often taken at departure and arrival times to have brief chats about the children. When children are just settling in or are shy, parents or family members are welcome to stay and observe or to share activities with the child. The school encourages parents to do this for as long as it takes to ensure that children settle happily.
34. School newsletters are regular and very informative and there is a very comprehensive website. A notice board for parents is kept fully up to date. The school brochure is produced

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in English and Bengali. The bilingual assistant is able to converse with Bengali speaking parents. Interpreters are available for other languages if needed, from the local education authority or from other local schools, and school documentation can be translated for parents. The school is very effective in working with parents who may not be fluent in English, and preventing language from being a barrier between school and home. The contribution of all parents is respected and valued as adding to the richness of school life.

35. The school plays a major part in local life and has excellent links with other providers within the community. It works closely with Sure Start in using the new multi-purpose room for parent workshops, a toy library and 'stay-and-play' sessions for younger children. The school has a developing role in the local Children's Centre Partnership and has plans, after the completion of building work, to re-establish after school and holiday play-schemes. The school has been particularly active in harnessing the support of local businesses and participating in community business partnership initiatives. Many major companies make product donations for the school to raffle, and a well-known department store gives each child a book every year. A senior partner from a city law firm acts as a business mentor for the headteacher, and staff from the firm come into the school regularly to read and talk with the children. The school is very effective in contributing to, and harnessing support from the community, for the benefit of children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and the leadership of other key staff is very good. The school is very well managed. Governance is good.

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Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets the school's direction very effectively, bringing the best out of the whole team.
- The school's leadership is very skilled in working with others to enhance children's education.
- The school openly evaluates its performance and is committed to pursuing improvement.

Commentary

36. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, which is shaped by concern for the personal development of every child. The team is very well led and all the staff are valued and helped to develop their skills further. The acting deputy headteacher is making a significant contribution to planning and assessment and the development of the curriculum.
37. The school's leadership harnesses the work of the whole staff team very effectively. Performance management is well established. Individual responsibilities are clearly designated, and teamwork by teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants is promoted very well. The expertise of staff, parents, governors and friends of the school is drawn upon for the benefit of pupils. The school's leadership ensures that all contributions are put to good use. Midday supervisors, the premises manager and the administrative staff contribute strongly to the sense of community and the efficient running of the school. The school's home-school links are managed very effectively, contributing to the high levels of confidence and trust in the school, and parents' active participation is supporting it.
38. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who works in school for one day a week is highly effective in managing provision in this area. Her expertise is put to very good use in providing guidance for all staff, so that teaching is closely matched to children's needs.

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39. The ethnic minority achievement grant allows the employment of a specialist teacher for a day a week, and also a bilingual nursery nurse, to support children who are learning English as an additional language. All funding under this grant is fully utilised for the purpose, and supplemented from the school's budget to ensure continuity of support throughout the week. The specialist teacher has produced an up-to-date policy, and has monitored and evaluated its implementation, identifying areas for further enhancement of this work throughout the school. The teamwork by the whole staff, including several who are bilingual, is very effective in supporting children's learning of English.
40. The school's leadership encourages evaluation and analysis of what works well and what could be better. The findings of research projects, in which the school has been involved, have been used very effectively in order to improve everyday practice. The monitoring of teaching and learning is woven into the school's work, and all staff are involved in daily evaluation of what has been achieved. The school improvement plan is very clear about the school's priorities and the actions needed to bring about improvement.
41. Governors support the school well and ensure compliance with all statutory requirements. They contribute valuable expertise, foster links with parents and the community, and are working to extend their oversight of the school's work.
42. The school now handles its own budget, and it does this very well, drawing on the skills of administrative staff and the expertise of governors. The school's leadership is very effective in securing additional grants and ensuring that these are put to good use. The school's expenditure and the large balances carried forward reflect money allocated for building projects which have, as yet, been only partly completed. The school gives very good value for money, using all available resources very effectively in giving children a very good start to their education.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£504,723	Balance from previous year	£79,785
Total expenditure	£455,756	Balance carried forward to the next	£128,752
Expenditure per pupil	£5,697		

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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

- Children feel confident, safe and secure in the welcoming school environment.
- Relationships are excellent between adults and children, engendering a happy atmosphere.
- Children develop very well socially through their play.
- Children are strongly encouraged to develop their independence.
- Well focused small-group discussions help children to deal with their emotional needs.

Commentary

43. Children feel confident, safe and secure in their home-bases and work and play areas, because the school provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Relationships between adults and children are excellent, giving children the support they need while, also encouraging their independence. Children newly settling in and those with specific emotional needs are given a great deal of sensitive care and attention. Sometimes this is done in small group discussions where 'persona' dolls, representing different characters, are used in a skilled way, for example to explore concerns about making friends.
44. Members of staff are quick to spot children's needs and act to help them, and they are clear and consistent in managing behaviour. Children are encouraged to be independent as far as they can in exercising choice, selecting materials and being responsible for tidying up and helping one another. They are taught good manners at snack and meal times, and helped to learn to share and take turns. Teaching in personal, social and emotional development is very good, and children learn very well as a result.
45. Social development through play is promoted very well, within activities indoors and outside. The excellent outdoor area enables a good variety of active play. A few children play on their own, but most children enjoy playing alongside each other and sharing in conversation on occasions. Some children play co-operatively together for short periods, discussing what they are going to do. The children work and play happily together, and begin to make friends.
46. Overall, children achieve very well and are on course to meet or exceed the designated goals in this area of learning by the end of reception. All groups of children achieve very well, building on their previous learning and experience. Children who are learning English as an additional language make very good progress socially. They play happily with others and gain confidence in interacting with adults and children. Children with special educational needs make progress in learning to make choices, to communicate confidently and to behave appropriately towards others. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the standards reached by children and the quality of teaching.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

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- The school's development of children's skills in speaking and listening is very good.
- Interesting opportunities are provided for children to write.
- Children's interest in stories and books is promoted well.
- The school plans to extend work which is helping children to link sounds and letters.

Commentary

47. Teaching is very good in communication, language and literacy, and it has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is very close teamwork by the staff in implementing the school's policy in this area of learning. The school's provision for communication and language has been enhanced by its involvement in an oral language research project over the last three years. It provides structured interventions through a teaching scheme designed for multi-lingual pre-school settings. Staff have been trained in the use of strategies for 'Talking Time' and 'Story Talk' sessions and the school is now planning to make a training video for use in other pre-school settings. The school has introduced small group sessions of oral language work for all children, whatever their language background, and every child participates in two of these sessions each week.
48. The focus on oral language is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The children benefit from participation in small groups where they all have plenty of opportunity to talk, to respond and to ask questions. Teachers, nursery nurses and assistants leading the groups are skilled in the use of questioning techniques to promote thinking and prediction, and they model grammatical structures and vocabulary well in their presentations to children. Role-play is encouraged and staff often provide commentaries and model the use of language for children.
49. Interesting opportunities are created for children to practise writing. Writing materials are to hand in every area, and there are writing tables set up in the garden. Children are able to use pencils, crayons, paints, and chalks, and a variety of types of paper. Children were attracted to the writing table to write a postcard or letter. They busily stuck on stamps and placed letters in envelopes before posting them in their letterbox, drawing on experience from an earlier outing to the Post Office. Children attempt symbols for letters, noting the print around them, and many are beginning to write the letters in their name. Older and more able children are eager to spell out real words. Several can write a few simple words, mostly names, on their own.
50. The school is making increasing use of songs and rhymes to build children's awareness of sounds and sound patterns. A further focus on the linking of sounds with letter names and symbols is being piloted, in brief sessions of quick letter games. Children responded eagerly to a game which involved guessing names from their initial sounds. The school recognises that this work in playing with sounds can be taken further in building strong foundations for reading and writing.
51. Stories have a high priority, whether read or told. The story tent is an exciting yet comfortable place in which to gather, to take part in listening to tales or looking at books. The tent makes the experience special, and children like to return on their own, to have another look at books to which they have been introduced. There is a good selection of books in each home-base. In the classroom where most language activities are held, the books are displayed well in an attractive book corner, with toys, puppets and a changing selection of books. Audiotapes for listening to stories are also available. Most children have a good interest in books, and can describe what they see in pictures, or even give a simple outline of a short tale. Two of the older children were able to retell the story of Rama and Sita, using puppets to help them. A few of the older children recognise some simple key words. The many labels and words around the nursery encourage attention to print. The school has a small library of attractive

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and suitable books, and children borrow a book each week to take home and share with their family.

52. Although English language use is delayed for many children, including the large minority who are at an early stage in acquiring English as an additional language, learning is very good overall. While standards overall are below national expectations, achievement is very good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children take an interest in numbers and make good progress in counting.
- Teaching is effective in introducing children to simple mathematical vocabulary.
- Activities are not always tailored to maximise children's mathematical thinking.

Commentary

53. When children start in the nursery, many are at a very early stage in their mathematical development. They achieve well because of good teaching and make good progress towards the early learning goals. Their progress is aided by the emphasis on oral language which helps children's grasp of number concepts, and supports bilingual children in demonstrating their understanding.
54. Children make good progress in learning to count. Most count reliably to at least three, and some can count to ten and beyond. They enjoy counting, as when hopping along a number line, or counting the cakes they have made. The school recognises that some children are capable of being challenged further, for example by counting the names of children present and relating this to a number line which extends beyond 20. Counting is reinforced through number rhymes and songs, and displays encourage children to notice numbers in the environment.
55. Children learn about shape, space and measures. They explore shapes chalked on the ground outside, and find out how much sand different containers will hold. Labels with activities, and words chalked on the ground prompt the use of mathematical vocabulary by staff and by the children themselves. For example, children were guided by a nursery nurse to compare 'full', 'half full' and 'empty' containers. Children were encouraged to read and to repeat positional language such as 'up' and 'along' as they moved around a circuit.
56. Many activities include a mathematical element, but this is not always developed enough to extend mathematical thinking, or to encourage children to explore as far as they can. For example, children were excited about an activity requiring the use of numbered tickets to board an aeroplane they had created, but the intention of extending skills in ordering and writing numbers was not fully realised. The school's analysis shows that children make better progress in numbers and counting, and in shape space and measures, than in using their knowledge to solve simple problems. The school recognises that this is an area for development, to build further on the good progress made since the last inspection in extending provision for mathematical learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

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- Children are confident in making things, and finding ways to achieve their purpose.
- The school develops children's knowledge and curiosity about the wider world.
- There is more to be done in extending children's exploration of living things.

Commentary

57. Teaching is good and children achieve well in this area of learning, so that they are in line with expectations for their age in making progress towards the early learning goals. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the provision of opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
58. Children enjoy using a range of construction materials, and are independent and imaginative in building and making things. They learn to select tools and materials and to use them sensibly. They benefit from specific teaching which helps them, for example, to fix boxes together when making models. They persist in making objects such as bags and hats, which they then use in their play. They explore materials in playing with dough, and in mixing ingredients for cooking. Children set to with brushes and buckets of water to 'paint' the inside of the playhouse in the garden, remarking on how the water washed away chalk marks. They explored how to build a wall, using sand as cement between the bricks.
59. Children learn about the wider world, for example talking about plane journeys and places they have visited. They understand that people use different languages, sometimes comparing words in English and Bengali. The school's cultural diversity is celebrated and this extends children's horizons. For example on a 'bring your parents to school' day, children were able to sample foods and activities from different cultures. Visits into the locality, and to museums in London, stimulate interest and extend learning.
60. Children use computers readily, learning to control the mouse. They were fascinated, for example, to find out that they could draw and make letters using a paint programme. They are interested in technology, enthusiastically taking digital photographs on a journey around the garden.
61. Children are very interested in exploring the garden, and the school is working well to develop their awareness of the environment. Children investigated the leaves which had fallen from the trees in the autumn, comparing their shapes. Children are curious about plants and animals, enjoying books and playing with models. They explore objects, for example looking at, feeling and talking about 'prickly' conker cases, but opportunities for first-hand investigation of the natural world are not always developed to the full.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside area provides very good opportunities for children to practise physical skills.
- Children enjoy and respond well to physical challenges.
- They learn to handle tools and materials safely and skilfully.

Commentary

62. Children achieve very well in their physical development, and reach standards which are good for their age. They are well supported by good teaching which helps them to develop their

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skills and to gain confidence in using them. There has been good improvement in this area of learning since the last inspection.

63. The school's excellent provision for outdoor learning includes many opportunities for children to practise their physical skills. Most of the children, and the boys in particular, spend a lot of time outside, enjoying the freedom and the space to explore and to test their physical skills. They persist in challenges, as seen, for example when children worked out how to use a bat to hit a ball swinging from a rope, and eventually succeeded in making contact.
64. Children are well supported by adults. For instance, a member of staff helped children to climb a ladder and then slide down a 'fireman's pole', giving them just the amount of help they needed, and encouraging greater independence at each attempt. Children gained great satisfaction from completing a circuit, which involved climbing and balancing, and from 'teaching' the member of staff how to do it. This involved using language to explain and give directions. The relating of words and actions was also shown in a book about jumping which had captioned photographs of the children 'flying off', 'leaping off' or 'plummeting off' a high bench.
65. Children show an interest in healthy eating and know about some of the foods which are good for them. They think about safety, for example donning hard hats to dig in the sandpit as 'Bob the Builder, and learning not to throw the sand about.
66. Children learn to manipulate tools and they use scissors well. They practise the use of a knife and fork at lunchtime. They gain control of pens, pencils and paintbrushes in drawing, painting and writing. The children take pleasure in mastering skills and in showing what they can do.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good variety of media are provided for children to explore in art.
- Children are taught skills well in creative activities.
- Role play is encouraged, although not always developed richly.

Commentary

67. In creative development, a variety of experiences are presented to children. In art, they are introduced to a wide range of media and materials, and have the opportunity to paint, to print, to draw, and to use malleable materials like plasticine and play dough. They use all sorts of paper and fabric for collages, and also include other materials and objects for interesting effects, as seen in a large group collage on the theme of 'fire', following a visit from the fire service. Children make models out of cardboard and boxes, and simple skills are well taught so that children can succeed, for example, in fixing materials together. Children are encouraged to draw and paint, and to look closely when doing so, as when they observed leaves and fruit and represented them in pictures. Children learn to select their own materials, and use them appropriately, as well as to help to clear up their own activities. Children's paintings and printing patterns, using overlaying colours, make attractive displays in home-bases.
68. In music, children enjoy learning and singing familiar songs and rhymes. They listen to music from a variety of styles, and different times and places. They are introduced to simple percussion instruments, and learn how to use them appropriately. A set of different types,

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sizes and shapes of ethnic drums proved attractive to children. They were shown how to use these properly, patting them with their hands, and how to control and maintain a rhythmic beat. This was then extended by adding faster and slower rhythms, and louder and softer playing. Most children showed a very good sense of rhythm. The children got much pleasure from finally playing their drums in concert with some vibrant music from the CD player. Children dance in response to music, moving energetically to a fast-paced modern dance track. Drama is promoted by the range of dressing up clothes, which are often linked to the themes of recent activities. Many children donned police uniforms following the visit from the police. The school provides a range of role-play areas, including a home corner and outdoor play houses. However, resources are not always developed sufficiently to help children elaborate their play, and to foster sustained imaginative involvement in response to stories and first-hand experiences.

69. Teaching is good in creative development. Enhancement for the arts also comes from musical events, and visits to places such as the art galleries. Standards are in line with expectations for this age in the progress being made towards the goals for the end of reception. Children, including those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs, achieve well. Standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained well since the last inspection.

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	1
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	2
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	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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