

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **COOKHAM NURSERY SCHOOL**

Cookham

LEA area: Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 109754

Headteacher: Mrs J Charters

Lead inspector: Mrs P Francis

Dates of inspection: 27 - 28 September 2004

Inspection number: 266662

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery  
School category: Maintained  
Age range of pupils: 3-5  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 69

School address: Station Hill  
Cookham  
Maidenhead  
Berkshire  
Postcode: SL6 9BT

Telephone number: 01628 520002  
Fax number: 01628 520002

Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Curry

Date of previous July 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cookham is a purpose built nursery school with 40 places in each of the two sessions, in the morning and afternoon. Most children come from the village of Cookham and surrounding villages, with a few children from the edges of Maidenhead and individuals from Bourne End. Most children are from an above average socio-economic background. The majority of children are white with very small numbers from mixed ethnic backgrounds. There are no children who speak English as an additional language. An average proportion of children join or leave the school during the course of the school year. Overall, children's attainment on entry is above average. The proportion of children who have special educational needs is below average and, currently, there are no children who hold a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The children with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties and significant delay in their speech. In 2003 the school received an Employer Recognition Award for its work in supporting students on work placements. In March 2004, the school gained the status of an Investor in People. During the inspection the school heard that the Centre for Research in Early Childhood at the University College, Worcester, has awarded the school its Quality Assurance standard for Effective Early Learning with an endorsement for Investors in Children.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2440	Mrs P Francis	Lead inspector	Communication, language and literacy; Knowledge and understanding of the world; Creative development.
9163	Mr G Humphrey	Lay inspector	
19916	Mrs D Kerr	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development; Mathematical development; Physical development; Special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

The school's effectiveness is **very good**, and it provides very good value for money. The school is expertly led by a dedicated headteacher and is managed very skilfully to bring out the best in others. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and all groups of children achieve very well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children reach high standards in all areas of learning.
- Children have very good attitudes to their work, they behave very well and have very good personal qualities due to the very good teaching of personal, social and emotional development and the very good relationships with the teaching staff.
- An exceptionally rich and interesting curriculum gives children a wealth of learning experiences through play and is an important contributory factor in children's very good achievement.
- The school takes very good care of the children and has very effective partnerships with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The key issues have been addressed fully. All groups of children now achieve very well because teaching and learning are very good. The very good advances in assessing children's progress, the quality of the curriculum and the increased use and rigour of self-evaluation have an important impact on children's achievements.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

**Achievement** is **very good** overall. All groups of children achieve very well across the school from their above average standards on entry. They reach well above the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in all the areas of learning.

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

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

**Teaching** is **very good** overall. There are strengths in the very effective teamwork and high expectations from staff, adults' use of the information from the very good assessment systems in planning to meet the needs of all groups of children, and in the challenges provided during adults' interactions with children. While the teachers extend children's basic skills in personal and social development, language and mathematical development very successfully in all activities, support staff miss some opportunities for integrating mathematical development incidentally. Staff make excellent use of a very good range of resources to create many varied practical, imaginative experiences. As a result of these positive features within the teaching, all groups of children learn very well.

The curriculum is excellent. A very good range of visits and visitors, the daily lunch club and summer holiday club enhance it very well. Accommodation and resources are very good, particularly the garden area that is used for all areas of learning. The provision of care, support, advice and guidance for children and links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management** are **very good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership based on a very clear vision for the school's direction and she has created an exceptional team. The governors provide good governance, but have only managed the school's budget for a term. They have recognised from this experience that they should make closer links between their financial management and strategic planning within the school's development plan. The school complies with statutory requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils are very pleased with the school. Both groups strongly agree that children like the school. Parents particularly praised the good teaching, the leadership and management of the school and the range of activities that their children find interesting and enjoyable. The inspection team agrees with these parental views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In this very effective school there are no major issues for the school to address, but the school should continue its development by:

- using the information from its self-evaluation to provide clearer educational priorities within the development plan and make closer links with its spending to ensure even better value for money.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning**

All groups of pupils achieve very well across the school. In all the areas of learning, standards are high.

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

- As a result of the very good teaching in the nursery and reception age groups, children achieve consistently very well and are likely to attain well above the goals children are expected to reach in all the areas of learning by the end of the reception year.
- The headteacher's very good leadership of the teaching and curriculum has a very positive impact on children's achievement.
- The very good assessment of children's progress and an excellent curriculum are additional factors that contribute to pupils' very good achievement.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children receive a very effective start to their education in the nursery. They settle into school very well due to the very effective induction procedures and the very good teaching of personal, social and emotional development. This very good foundation in personal and social skills underpins children's achievements in the other areas of learning. The excellent teamwork by staff and very good relationships ensure that children feel secure and confident to tackle new activities. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and the good additional support helps them to learn important basic skills. Due to the emphasis placed by the headteacher on improving adults' skills in assessment, they use the information gained to meet the needs of children of all abilities, including the higher attainers, very successfully.
2. The headteacher teaches regularly alongside her staff and is a very good role model for them in her teaching. The self-evaluation of the school's provision undertaken for the Effective Early Learning project has been very accurate and observations within the nursery have led to analyses of strengths and weaknesses and appropriate action to tackle any weaker areas to improve children's achievements. The excellent curriculum that is broad, relevant, and practical is based on learning through play, and provides many very imaginative experiences for children that stimulate their imaginations and contribute very effectively to their very good achievement in all areas of learning. Children are very articulate, have very good basic skills in reading, writing and number and have the confidence to apply these in new learning.

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

Children's attitudes, behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

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

- Children show very high levels of interest in their work as a result of the wide range of exciting activities provided.
- Children have very good relationships with each other and with adults, and as a result, behave very well.
- Children’s personal development is promoted very well through carefully planned provision.

## Commentary

3. It is clear that children enjoy coming to the nursery. Before the inspection, all parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting with the lead inspector agreed that children enjoy school and run down the path in their enthusiasm to arrive at the start of sessions. Because daily routines are well established, children enter happily and leave their parents and carers confidently, ready to start work. Their enthusiasm is maintained throughout their time at the nursery, because staff provide such a wide range of well planned, practical activities that engage the children’s interest and imagination.
4. The quality of relationships among all those involved with the work of the nursery, and particularly the teaching staff, is high. Adults are excellent role models and this leads to friendly, courteous behaviour and high quality relationships amongst the children. Children play harmoniously together, sometimes for extended periods on one activity. They speak politely to one another; say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, and older children help younger ones with classroom protocols. A lovely example of this was seen when an older boy motioned to his younger neighbour that it was time to listen, by pressing his finger to his lips as a signal and nodding meaningfully in the direction of the teacher! Children with special educational needs are equally positive in their attitudes and enjoy the extra help and support they receive.
5. Children’s personal development is promoted very effectively through the nursery’s work. A very well planned curriculum ensures children have very good opportunities to learn about their own and others’ cultures and beliefs, to learn about themselves and to understand and respect the views of others. They understand they have responsibilities towards each other, and need to work together to make the nursery a happy place. As a result, they achieve highly and are on course to reach well above the standards expected by the end of the reception year.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.54	School data	0

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

6. Although attendance at nursery school is not statutory, attendance and punctuality are both good because children are so keen to attend. There were no exclusions last year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. The school’s curriculum is excellent. Provision for pupils’ care and for their guidance and support is very good. The school has a very good partnership with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are very good across the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The consistently good teaching by support staff contributes effectively to the very good teaching by teachers and leads to children’s very good learning and achievement.
- Teachers, nursery nurses and the teaching assistant create an excellent team, have very good working partnerships, enjoy very good relationships with their groups and manage children very well.
- Staff make excellent use of a very good range of resources to create many varied practical, imaginative experiences for children to learn very productively.
- Very good assessment systems are used very successfully to respond to children’s specific needs.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	6	0	0	0	0

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

7. The quality of all teaching observed was at least good; most of the teaching by teachers and a quarter of teaching by nursery nurses was very good. The headteacher, as the only full time teacher in the school, works alongside staff and has created an excellent team who are very effective in their planning, preparation of resources, assessment of children’s progress and interactions with children that make a major contribution to the very good learning and achievement in the school. Together, they have built up a very good range of resources that are used exceptionally well to stimulate children’s imaginations in many varied practical activities. They also use the very good accommodation, both inside and out, extremely well for all the areas of learning. For example, children have the opportunity to explore musical sounds indoors as well as in a musical house in the garden.
8. In the previous inspection, teaching was reported to be good with a weakness in the way that learning intentions, identified in short-term planning, related to the information from assessments to meet children’s needs fully. There has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment. All parents who responded to the questionnaire before the inspection agreed that teaching is good. Staff plan very effectively and meet the specific needs of groups and individuals very well. The reception age children in their final term in the nursery are withdrawn regularly by a teacher into a group for more direct teaching - as seen, for example, in the teaching of phonic knowledge, story time, and the exploration of fruits in knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development. All adults support very well any children who have special educational needs and a teaching assistant helps specific difficulties. Each week, staff meet to plan the activities within the theme and the areas of learning are integrated seamlessly into the experiences provided for the children to explore. As a result, children are engrossed in the activities, make very good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding and work independently and collaboratively as appropriate.
9. There is a very effective balance between times for direct teaching and occasions when children make choices of what they wish to do. Children are given much freedom in their choices and, within the established routines, soon learn to become independent. Even then they know when and where to seek help, as was seen when a child fetched a teacher to assist

in dealing with a disagreement. Teaching adults are very skilled in intervening in children's play by challenging questions to extend their learning. They combine learning from different areas of the curriculum very well and extend children's basic skills in personal and social development and language very successfully in all activities. While teachers also integrate basic skills in mathematical development, support staff miss some opportunities to teach skills in number incidentally.

10. At the end of the sessions, the teacher guided children in talking about their work and in evaluating simply what they had learned; in this way, children are beginning to understand how they can improve. A new entrant, in his third week in the school, responded 'I have learnt to hammer nails' when asked what he had learned. Teaching adults meet after each session to evaluate the quality of the experiences provided for children, whether the learning intentions were met and the progress made by individual children. Notes are taken that are used to plan future sessions and for entries into each child's individual record. These records contribute to the Foundation Stage profiles on each child's progress that are shared with parents and the next school.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provides an excellent range of learning opportunities and is enriched very well. There is a very good match of teaching staff, very good resources and accommodation to meet the demands of the curriculum.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is very well planned to provide many, varied, relevant experiences that are based on children learning through their play.
- All staff employ very good inclusive practice within the school and the provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
- The school makes very good use of its partnerships with parents and the community to enrich the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

11. The nursery team, led by the headteacher, plans an imaginative curriculum in which all the areas of learning are inter-linked to provide a very good range of connected experiences and very effective progression from the nursery to reception stages. The curriculum is evaluated rigorously. Intentionally, the weekly planning becomes more flexible as the week progresses so that the information from the evaluations can be used to adapt experiences, extend others and make different use of the adults.

## **Example of outstanding practice**

### **The exceptional curriculum, that has its foundation in children learning through play, promotes children's high achievement.**

The organisation of the week's programme ensures that children receive a very good balance of taught and 'free choice' activities across the curriculum. The theme of food was apparent in many of the activities and children entered school each day very keen to explore the exciting challenges that had been prepared for them. By Tuesday, the Farm Shop, in which children acted out their shopping on Monday, had additions: the Café, and a kitchen in which children prepared meals. The teacher worked with a group in the kitchen, who buttered bread and chose the ingredients and shapes for the sandwiches. Another group squeezed oranges for fruit juice. The customers arriving at the Café parked their vehicles carefully, were shown to a table by the nursery nurse in role as the head waiter, gave their orders from the menus previously written by children and seemed to enjoy the unusual fillings of ham and jam in their sandwiches! Other children

became waiters, noted customers' orders and fetched meals from the kitchen. This high quality play, encompassing all areas of learning, had a very positive impact on children's achievement as well as enabling them to have great fun and enjoyment.

12. Expertise from parents and other visitors, as well as visits to places in the community are used very well to enrich the curriculum. The daily lunch club and summer holiday club also supplement the curriculum and enhance children's personal development and help to prepare them for the full day in the primary school. The school's very good resources and accommodation are used very effectively to provide interesting experiences for children. The weakness in resources for information and communication technology (ICT) identified in the previous report has been addressed. The outdoor area, that is spacious and includes mature trees, a covered area, paths and garden borders, is used very successfully for all areas of learning.
13. The school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils is achieved through the very good support provided by teaching adults. All children with special educational needs have individual education plans highlighting their specific needs. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that targets reflect the progress made. All children with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as their peers. The very good ethos within the school promotes very good inclusion where all children are valued and supported, both academically and personally in a very caring and secure school environment.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The standards of care, welfare, safety, support and guidance provided by the school are very good. Staff listen carefully to what the children have to say and place very good value on children's views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of the school ethos and environment is very good.
- There are very good relationships within the school.
- There are very good arrangements for child protection and health and safety.
- Induction arrangements for children are very good.

### **Commentary**

14. The welfare, support and pastoral care provided by the school are very good and are carefully matched to the needs of individual children. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and very effective and there is very good provision for first aid. Children are very well supervised and taught to use school equipment safely and to observe high standards of personal hygiene. Children's understanding of their own welfare and health needs is very well nurtured within the curricular provision. The school is cleaned and maintained to a very high standard. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer and staff exercise their responsibilities for child protection with vigilance and care. The school draws upon external advice and support when required. Many aspects of the provision for welfare and pastoral care have been successfully improved since the previous inspection.
15. The induction arrangements for children and their parents when they first enter the school are very good. These arrangements ensure that parents have a very good level of understanding about the school and what it can provide and achieve, and the staff, for their part, have a good awareness of the needs of each new arrival. Relationships are very good and staff listen carefully and value what the children say and respond positively

to their suggestions and personal needs. The children are very well prepared for their entry into primary school and very well supported during the transfer.

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

The school has achieved a very good partnership with parents based on very effective two-way communication. Links with other schools and the wider community are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very close working partnership with parents.
- Parents have very positive views about the school.
- Parents give active support towards their children's learning.
- There are very strong links with a wide variety of other schools.
- There are very good links with the community.

### **Commentary**

16. The school has achieved a very good working partnership with parents and this has been well maintained since the previous inspection. Parents express very positive views about the value and quality of the early years' education and personal care that the school provides. Very effective two-way communication between the school and parents ensures that their views are noted and acted upon. The school provides very good information about the early years' curriculum and its approach towards teaching and this enables parents to support their children's learning very effectively.
17. Detailed notes are kept on children's progress and these are shared with parents during regular review conferences. These assessment and monitoring notes demonstrate that teachers and their support staff have a good knowledge and understanding of individual children. A full written report is provided during each child's last term in the school. There are frequent opportunities for parents to attend workshops on the six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Two curricular aspects are covered every term to ensure that all parents with children who are new to the school are fully acquainted with the curriculum by the end of their first year.
18. There is no formal parent teacher association but a number of fundraising and social events are organised with the help of parents and these are very well attended. The annual 'Fun Day' attracts visitors from the wider community as well as large numbers of past pupils and their parents. There are special events that specifically target fathers and grandparents, such as the 'Dads into School Week' that was particularly successful. A significant number of parents help in school on a regular basis and others visit to talk about their jobs or particular experiences that may be relevant to a current topic or theme. Every week the school runs a 'drop in' centre for parents with toddlers or babies.
19. For two weeks during the summer holidays the school runs a 'Holiday Club' for young children and this is very popular with families in the locality. The school has close links with the local parish church, the day centre for the elderly and a number of local businesses. There are very strong links with a wide variety of other schools and colleges. Close consultation with the three receiving primary schools ensures curricular continuity and supports children when they are about to transfer to their next school.

20. The headteacher is involved in the local education authority's support team for the Early Years, and through this has developed close relationships with many other providers of early years and nursery education. The school has also developed very good links with local secondary schools, providing work experience for their pupils, and also offers training places for students at Berkshire College of Agriculture and Reading University. Overall, the links with the community and other schools and colleges are very good and have been significantly developed since the previous inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership based on an exceptionally clear vision for the school's direction that is shared by her staff and governors. The other staff support her well in their curricular leadership roles. Management by the headteacher and staff is very good. The school is governed effectively.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is excellent teamwork amongst staff that ensures children are secure and well cared for.
- The school's performance is rigorously evaluated, enabling it to identify accurately the areas for development.
- Governors keep in close touch with the work of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The school is in the early stages of fully managing its own finances and the school development plan is not yet clearly prioritised and costed to help governors carry out their monitoring role efficiently.

### **Commentary**

21. The leadership and management of the school have improved from good to very good since the previous inspection. The school is expertly led by a dedicated headteacher. Her very clear vision for the direction of the school is securely based on a clear understanding of how young children learn best. She is an excellent practitioner and leads the staff by example, setting high standards in her teaching and bringing out the best in others through skilful management. Her expertise is fully recognised and appreciated by the local educational authority, demonstrated by her role as a member of their support team for the Foundation Stage in other local schools.
22. The school governors share the headteacher's vision and maintain their commitment to high standards and a caring ethos based on the school's clearly stated aims. They meet regularly, ensure they have a working knowledge of the school through a well-organised system of committees and frequent informal visits, and are involved early on with the formulation of the school's development plan. While the school has managed a partially delegated budget for some time, governors have taken on the wider responsibility of managing the school's fully delegated budget since April 2004. As they have not yet been responsible for the budget for a full financial year, a financial table has not been included in this report. The current school development plan is a detailed and helpful document, but does not identify fully the costs of planned improvements or identify agreed priorities for spending. As a result, it does not yet provide the information governors need to monitor spending rigorously and ensure even better value for money. The headteacher and governors have already identified this as an area for review and development based on their experiences this year.
23. A very strong feature of the school's success is the excellent teamwork that exists amongst the staff. Adults lead by example, setting and expecting high standards of courtesy, respect and

consideration for others. They are committed to running a school in which each individual matters. This leads to a calm, orderly and highly productive working environment in which the children feel secure, cared for and valued. As a result, children's behaviour is very good and they have very positive attitudes to learning. This teamwork is a significant factor in the success of the school's exciting and imaginative curriculum and very effective system for monitoring children's progress. Staff meet frequently to plan together, review their work and check on children's progress. The school day is highly organised, with everyone very clear about their roles and responsibilities, so that children can participate safely in a wide range of practical activities that make learning fun.

24. The very good management of the school is clearly demonstrated in the accolades that the school has received this year. The school has developed self-evaluation systems using The Effective Early Learning Programme from University College, Worcester, and has received the university's quality assurance award as a result. The recent Investors in People report describes the school as 'an impressive organisation'. The school's rigorous self-evaluation is successful in enabling it to bring about improvement and ensure every child achieves very well. The provision for children with special educational needs is managed very carefully and there is very good liaison with the outside agencies involved in supporting these children.
25. There are no significant barriers to raising achievement. The skill, dedication and enthusiasm of the staff, and the support and commitment of parents and governors are likely to ensure that Cookham Nursery continues to go from strength to strength in the future.



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

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

There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection; standards have improved from above average to well above average because teaching and learning are very good compared with good. The headteacher provides very good leadership to the curriculum and is supported well by the team of teachers and nursery nurses who share some responsibility for areas of learning. The headteacher gives a very good lead to the quality of teaching. She teaches regularly alongside the staff and advises them on the use of teaching strategies as well as in the planning of the curriculum and assessment of children's progress. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection in assessment, which is now very good. Adults make careful observations of children at work. At the end of each morning or afternoon session, teaching adults meet to evaluate the quality of the activities and the progress of individual children. Notes are taken at these discussions so that the information guides future planning and contributes to records of children's progress in their foundation profiles.

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

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

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

- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and rich curriculum.
- Excellent teamwork by staff and very good relationships ensure children feel secure and confident.
- Individual children's progress is monitored carefully, enabling staff to plan the next steps in learning for each child.

#### **Commentary**

26. This area is at the heart of the school's work. Children's personal qualities are nurtured and developed very well and almost all should attain the standards expected in this area by the end of the reception year. Many are likely to attain higher standards so that overall, children reach well above the goals expected for their age. Staff share a firmly held philosophy that young children learn best in a calm, well ordered and stimulating learning environment. They organise the day so that children are very clear about the routines, and set high expectations of courtesy and behaviour. As a result, even the youngest children come happily into the room, self register in their three registration groups by selecting their name, choose an activity until it is time to settle quietly on the mat for the focussed activity. Older children enjoy taking responsibility for some of the daily tasks. A helper will move confidently around the classroom and outside area when ringing the 'tidy up' bells and the rest respond to the cue, packing away toys and activities quickly and sensibly ready for the next activity. These very well established routines give children a sense of security both inside and outside the classroom with the result that they tackle new activities with confidence and enthusiasm.
27. The high quality relationships and excellent sense of teamwork that exists amongst staff have a very positive impact on children's social development. Children play together

considerately, often for extended periods, sharing toys, games and equipment with one another. This co-operation is a strong feature of the outdoor play, when children serve one another in the Farm Shop Café for example, or when they co-operate together on the 'construction site', sharing spades and hard hats. All children are treated with respect. Staff make it a priority to talk and listen to children and their interest and affection for them shines through. The integration of children with special educational needs is very good ensuring their involvement in all aspects of nursery life.

28. Staff are constantly monitoring children's progress, noting small steps in development and discussing individuals on a daily basis to help them plan the next stage of learning. Because they know the children so well, they are able to guide their play and focus their questions and support on what each child needs to learn next. Exciting activities are planned with this in mind and often they are linked to an overarching theme to help children make links in their learning. Activities based on fruit, for example, helped children explore the wonder of the natural world as they used fruit for a wide range of practical activities linked to number, art, craft and language. The nursery promotes children's cultural and spiritual development very well. Children eat food from different countries and experience Indian dancing and African drumming; they use resources in role-play that reflect different cultures such as Chinese dressing up clothes and dolls from different ethnic groups. There are quiet places such as book corners where children can sit and reflect, and the large horse chestnut tree in the centre of the nursery grounds is a constant stimulus for activities that promote a sense of wonder and beauty.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Due to very good teaching, children attain high standards and achieve very well in all aspects of communication, language and literacy.
- Teaching adults provide very good, imaginative opportunities across the curriculum to develop children's skills in communication, language and literacy.

### **Commentary**

29. In sessions in the nursery and reception age ranges, most of the teaching was very good. Consequently, children are likely to reach well above the early learning goals by the time they complete their reception year. Although most children enter the nursery with attainment that is above average for their age, all children, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, learn and achieve very well during their time in the school because of the very good teaching and the excellent curriculum that is provided. There are frequent, well developed opportunities in all the areas of learning for children to communicate in speech and writing. The adults provide a very imaginative range of activities based on play, both inside and outdoors. There is a very good balance between activities directed by the adults and those that children choose. The teaching adults are skilled at intervening in children's play to ask questions that extend their learning.
30. As in the previous inspection, most children have very well developed speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively to each other and the adults, are highly articulate and have an extensive vocabulary for their ages. There are very good opportunities for children to begin the skills of reading and writing. The well-resourced library is well used by children to share books during times when they make choices on what they wish to do. A teacher, in directed activity,

taught phonic knowledge to the older children of reception age in a very imaginative way. Pairs of children took their baskets from the farm shop into the garden to find fruits, their initial sounds and names. This activity was great fun and children thoroughly enjoyed their learning. Older children choose books to share at home guided by the teachers and receive many chances to write within play activities, for example, menus and signs for the Farm Shop Café.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children learn and achieve very well.
- Teachers plan a wide range of practical activities linked to other work to make learning fun.
- Children have regular daily opportunities to practise counting.

## Commentary

31. Children develop their mathematical understanding through regular, planned opportunities to count, measure, make and observe patterns, compare objects and identify shapes in a wide range of practical activities. In a typical day, children will have some formal opportunities to count and to carry out a practical activity with a mathematical focus, for example, when sorting fruits into matching sets according to colour or shape. Most children enter the nursery familiar with the names of numbers and higher attaining children can already count and do very simple calculations in their heads. Staff identify what children have already experienced early on, and take account of where they are when planning mathematical experiences. This was demonstrated clearly in a focussed mathematical activity in which children helped a teddy bear to count using a number line. The majority of the group of younger children were able to count to ten with teddy, and with support, to thirteen. The teacher then asked higher attaining children to count well beyond that, and try some harder calculations in their heads. She made the learning fun with action songs and rhymes, and by ensuring that teddy made mistakes, the children helped him out with the correct answers. Children have daily opportunities to discuss the day and date to develop their understanding of time and seasons.
32. Many of the practical 'free choice' activities on offer support mathematical development. For example, the nursery is very well resourced with games that develop children's understanding of shape and pattern. Higher attaining reception children were observed engrossed in sequencing coloured tiles onto a board. A teacher discussed their work with them and helped them to explain the rules for their pattern. The resulting effort was then passed through the scanner to record the child's work for filing in his individual portfolio, and to help with teachers' future planning. The experienced teachers are particularly good at making the most of every opportunity to practise counting and develop the language of mathematics, for example, when supervising children playing in the café, or rolling balls down a pipe to see which rolled the furthest. Less experienced staff sometimes miss these opportunities.
33. Children are not required to record their work formally on a regular basis, although they learn to write their numbers and draw simple shapes. Nevertheless, their number skills and understanding of mathematical concepts are extended appropriately. All children, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs achieve very well and are likely to reach well above the standards expected by the end of the reception year. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Children enjoy their practical activities that are skilfully planned to help them learn through play. They concentrate well and co-operate with one another on shared tasks. Children with special educational needs take full part in the fun and games and often receive extra help from an adult to ensure they do not miss out.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Due to the very good teaching, standards are high and children learn and achieve very well.
- An exceptionally rich and interesting curriculum gives children a wealth of learning experiences.
- Very effective resources promote children's interest and help them to learn through a variety of practical experiences.
- The weakness in the ICT aspect of the area of learning, identified during the previous inspection, has been addressed fully.

## Commentary

34. Children of all ages and prior attainments learn and achieve very well due to the very good teaching. Teaching adults plan a very good variety of imaginative, practical experiences based in play to ensure that children have a very good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The areas inside and out of doors and the very good resources are used very well for these activities. During the inspection, for example, children explored and investigated the way that toy vehicles travelled down plastic guttering, how the ingredients for apple crumble changed after they had been cooked, used their senses to investigate fruits, observed the guinea pigs feeding, constructed various models with Lego, wooden bricks and train tracks and selected the tools they needed to join wood with nails using a hammer. When new skills were needed, an adult was at hand to teach them. This occurred when a child needed to hold a piece of wood vertically. The nursery nurse introduced the vice and showed the child how to use it to hold the wood in a vertical position. As a result, the child successfully used the new tool and hammered in a nail independently.
35. By the end of the reception year, children are likely to reach well above the early learning goals, as a significant proportion of children are working within the first level of the National Curriculum in science, design and technology, ICT, history and geography during the first weeks of their first term in the reception year. During direct teaching and interactions with children in their 'free choice' activities, adults are very skilled at questioning to extend their learning.
36. Photographs of children at work also illustrate that teachers plan a very good variety of activities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They found out about the past when talking to visiting elderly people during 'Grandparents Week', they found out about features of the place they live in and of more distant places when visitors from other countries talked about their homes, such as in Spain and Turkey. They began to know about their own and other cultures and beliefs when they celebrated Christmas and the Chinese New Year. As well as very good use of visitors to the school, children go out into the community and further afield to explore their world. During the previous inspection, a weakness was identified in the use of ICT. The school has improved its resources and has plans to enhance them further. Children have many opportunities to use ICT during their activities, for example, they showed very good skills in using a mouse to control a computer, a scanner, an interactive whiteboard, tapes and CDs for music, and in using the telephone for conversations in role-play activities.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good resources enable children to have a wide range of experiences.
- Children have many opportunities to handle tools and equipment.

## Commentary

37. This is another area where very good teaching enables all children to achieve very well, and almost all are likely to reach well above the standards expected by the time they leave the reception year. Children have regular opportunities to use the attractive outdoor play area for extended sessions. The large garden area allows for a broad range of activities and plenty of space for running, jumping, hopping and skipping. The nursery is very well resourced with playground toys and construction equipment and children become skilled at moving around the space, steering around obstacles and throwing and catching with increasing accuracy. Where adults extend the play, for example by encouraging children to aim at a specific target, or move over the apparatus in a different way, children try hard to improve.
38. Children's confidence to explore and experiment with toys and apparatus is extended because the rules for keeping safe are made very clear. Children who had only been attending for three weeks knew exactly where they were permitted to play, and which direction they could take when riding the wheeled toys. Most children pedal bikes and trucks adeptly for their age and rarely bump into each other.
39. From the time they start, children are effectively taught the skills they need to manipulate small tools and equipment through the many opportunities for practical activities. Children enjoy taking their turn at woodwork and, with close adult supervision, hammer nails and saw wood. Children servicing the Farm Shop Café made sandwiches and cut them out in dainty shapes with metal pastry cutters. Staff expect children to be as independent as possible and they quickly learn to dress themselves, help prepare the fruit snacks and handle tools such as knives, paintbrushes and scissors with care.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Due to the very good teaching, children learn and achieve very well and reach well above average standards.
- The curriculum is extremely rich and stimulating and enhances children's imagination.
- Teaching adults use the very good resources very effectively, especially for children to explore sound and to use their imagination in role-play activities.

## Commentary

40. The quality of teaching is very good for pupils of nursery and reception ages and children are likely to reach well above the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. Teaching adults pay very careful attention to stimulating children's imagination in role-play activities, dance, music, and art and design. The planned creative experiences are very well linked to the overarching theme and to the other areas of learning, especially personal and social development, language, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Adults also provide very good opportunities for children to use a good range of materials and to respond to experiences and express their ideas. Children work well together, are keen to take part in the activities and sustain their concentration very well for their ages. Teachers are very clear about what they want children to learn and use resources very imaginatively to introduce ideas. In a

very good lesson with reception children, the teacher introduced musical beat using a toy 'beat baby'. She used a very varied range of tones and volume in her voice to create different moods and chose contrasting pieces of music to demonstrate different beats. The children were engrossed, enjoyed the session and interpreted the music by using movements that matched the beats of a march and a calypso.

41. The teaching adults provide many very imaginative, creative experiences in an exceptionally rich and well-resourced curriculum that encourages children to achieve very well. There were several role-play activities both inside and out during the inspection; play houses, a farm shop that expanded with a café on the second day, and a road construction site. Adults within role-play extend children's learning by their very skilful questioning. A nursery nurse became the headwaiter in the Farm Shop Café. She directed her team of waiters to new customers to take their orders once they had chosen from the menus, prepared by children in the writing corner the previous day. The waiters went inside the main nursery area to the role-play kitchen to collect food from a team of children who were preparing sandwiches to be served to the customers. At other times, children choose and act out their roles without adult assistance, as in the construction site when children wearing protective hard hats cleared and dug a piece of ground with spades, trowels and wheelbarrows. In all the imaginative play situations, children are highly motivated, engaged and enthusiastic.
42. Children explore colour, texture, shape, form and space using a very good range of materials and tools. They used seeds, coloured rice and pasta shapes to make patterns and pictures in clay with a visiting consultant and they printed with fruits. The weakness identified in the previous inspection that children need more opportunities to develop their skills in observational drawing has been addressed. After an introduction to fruits and the exploration of these using their senses, reception children drew them carefully from observation.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).*



