

INSPECTION REPORT

COLLEGE GREEN NURSERY SCHOOL AND SERVICES

Kensal Rise

LEA area: London Borough of Brent

Unique reference number: 101491

Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Yianni

Lead inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 January 2005

Inspection number: 266750

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:	0 – 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	56
School address:	161 College Road London
Postcode:	NW10 3PH
Telephone number:	0208 969 2179
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Chris Murdoch
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

College Green became a Neighbourhood Nursery in October 2004, offering extended year and day provision for up to 41 children aged three to four. It provides 35 full-time places and six designated inclusive nursery places for deaf and hearing-impaired children. Additionally, it began to make provision for under-threes in October 2004: 15 under-threes are currently on roll, shortly increasing to 26. In the autumn term, the school also became the base for Brent's Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Service – an outreach service for deaf and hearing-impaired children from birth to 19 years. The service offers peripatetic and domiciliary visits to parents and children at home and at other mainstream schools in the authority. The nursery provides a baby and toddler drop-in for deaf and hearing-impaired families, neonatal screening for babies and toddlers, and portage-trained staff complete domiciliary visits. A new after-school club is available for nursery children, story sack and sensory toy library provision is made, and sensory and observational rooms are available for community use.

The school serves a local community that is socially and culturally mixed. The majority of children come from the local area, apart from the children with hearing impairment who travel from all parts of the authority. Four per cent of nursery children are eligible for free school meals and one child is in public care. The school is situated on the boundaries of wards that are in areas of high deprivation and many of the children in the under-threes come from these neighbouring wards. The school population is ethnically diverse, although the most dominant group is white British. Nineteen per cent of the children speak English as an additional language, ten are at an early stage in acquiring English and seven different languages are spoken in the school. Ten per cent of the children have been identified as having special educational needs, with hearing impairment being the most frequent need. Attainment on entry to the nursery is in line with national expectations.

Since the last inspection, the school has moved to new premises, changed its name (it was previously Doyle Nursery School) and extended the scope of the provision it makes to the extent that it is a very different institution from that inspected in June 1999.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15918	Margaret Julia Goodchild	Lead inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development Creative development English as an additional language
1166	Rosemary Hussain	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that enables children in the Foundation Stage¹ and those who are deaf or hearing impaired to achieve very well. Standards reached by most children are likely to exceed national expectations by the time they move on to reception class in primary school. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in the Foundation Stage. Brent's Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service has developed very well since it was based in the school at the beginning of this academic year. The school has also recently made provision for under threes: this aspect of its work is at an early stage of development and is satisfactory. The headteacher is a very effective leader and the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is planned very well to ensure that children have a wide range of stimulating learning experiences; improvement is needed in planning for under-threes.
- All aspects of provision for children who are deaf or hearing impaired are very good, and these children benefit enormously from the high quality support and teaching they receive.
- Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage, especially in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The headteacher provides inspired leadership, which gives rise to strong teamwork in the Foundation Stage; day-to-day co-ordination in the under threes is not yet satisfactory.
- The school works very closely with parents and has very good links with the community.
- Children are cared for very well in the Foundation Stage; the level of care in the under threes is not yet up to the standard found in the rest of the school.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected, in June 1999. There were no key issues for improvement identified at the last inspection, but the minor issues pointed out were used well to improve the school's practices and to raise standards. Furthermore, the school has significantly extended the scope of its provision since the last inspection, being designated as a Neighbourhood Nursery and becoming the base for the whole of the local education authority's Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service - which caters for children and young people from birth to 19 years.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is good overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and for children with hearing impairment. Children achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in mathematical development, physical development and creative development. The school's provision supports the satisfactory development of children who are under three.

Promotion of children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good in the Foundation Stage. Three to four year olds have very positive attitudes, and behaviour is very good throughout the school. The school does much to instil confidence and to raise the self-esteem of deaf and hearing-impaired children. The promotion of children's personal development in the under threes is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage and for children with hearing impairment; they are

¹ The Foundation Stage refers to the education and care the school provides within the nursery for children aged three to four years, as opposed to the provision it makes for under-threes.

satisfactory in the under threes. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well planned but learning experiences are not yet planned well enough for children under three. The school provides children with good support and care is very good in the Foundation Stage and for children with hearing impairment. Partnership with parents and links with the community are very good. Links with other educational establishments are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership – she has a clear vision, high expectations and is committed to making all aspects of provision as good as possible. She receives very good support from the acting deputy head and from the co-ordinator of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service. The leadership and management of information and communication technology are excellent. Morale is high amongst staff in the Foundation Stage and teamwork is strong, with children's best interests given central place. In under threes, effective day-to-day co-ordination and teamwork have not yet been established. Since this aspect of the school's provision opened a few months ago, there have been difficulties in staffing and a number of the staff are new. Governance is satisfactory: governors – especially those who are also parents of children in the school – provide very good support. The governing body is developing its capacity to challenge senior managers and to monitor the school's work but these aspects are not yet strong enough.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the provision the school makes. Those with children in the Foundation Stage or whose children are deaf or hearing impaired are delighted with the quality of education and care. Parents of under threes are pleased with the service the school offers but some have been aware of the adverse effect of difficulties in staffing. Children in the Foundation Stage are clearly very happy with the school and their ideas are used very effectively in planning activities. Parents say that their children are keen to return to school after the holidays and are upset when they cannot attend.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the headteacher, senior staff and governors should do to improve the school's work is:

- Bring the quality of education and care in under threes up to that found in the rest of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children's achievement is good overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and for children who are deaf or hearing impaired. Children who are under three are developing satisfactorily overall as a result of the provision the school makes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good in mathematical development, physical development and creative development.
- Children who are deaf and hearing impaired achieve very well, especially in communication and social development: they make rapid gains to reach standards that are close to the average for their age.
- Children who are learning English as an additional language generally make very good progress.
- The development of children under three is satisfactory overall but their progress is not promoted consistently.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection, achievement in the Foundation Stage was good. It is now very good as a result of improvements in teaching and the curriculum. The extension of the school's involvement with specialist teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired has strengthened the overall quality of education and, thus, raised children's achievement.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in knowledge and understanding of the world. In each of these areas of learning, they are likely to exceed national expectations by the time they move on to reception classes in primary school. This is in response to very good teaching and a varied, stimulating curriculum. Children's achievement is especially good in their use and understanding of information and communication technology: an aspect of the curriculum that is excellently resourced and skilfully led by an experienced subject specialist. Achievement is good in mathematical development, physical development and creative development. Most children are likely to exceed national expectations in mathematical development by the time they leave the nursery. They are confident when engaging in physical activities in the outdoor area and have very good opportunities to develop skills through activities that involve the use of tools and equipment. Children have very good opportunities to develop their imagination through role-play and their creativity through working with visiting artists. Day-to-day opportunities to develop children's skills in art, music and dance could be extended.
3. The achievement of deaf and hearing impaired children and those with special educational needs is very good because they gain in confidence as learners quickly in response to very good teaching and careful assessment. As a result of very good teaching and support, with a strong emphasis on developing children's language and communication, nearly all the hearing-impaired children become confident communicators and readily join in activities. By the time they leave the school, their attainment is consequently nearly the same as that of hearing children. The system of including deaf children in mainstream nursery activities, so that they are learning alongside their peers for much of the time, is totally inclusive. It ensures that all

children with special educational needs make very good progress towards their individual education plan targets and deaf children learn how to adapt effectively within a hearing environment. Discussions with mainstream primary and secondary schools show that deaf and hearing-impaired pupils achieve as well as their mainstream peers as a result of the very good outreach support from the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service within other schools in the authority.

4. Children who are acquiring English as an additional language make very good progress overall and benefit a great deal in communication and language from the support for hearing-impaired children. Most staff pay careful attention to extending their language and encouraging them to contribute. The use of visual resources and the way all children are encouraged to develop skills in basic signing support their achievement. Occasionally, less experienced staff do not tease out how much these children understand or make sure that new words are explained to them. The school's records of children's progress show that children for whom English is an additional language and who are of ethnic minority heritage progress at a similar rate to their peers.
5. Children who are under three are making satisfactory progress against the national guidance published for this age group. In some sessions, individual children make good progress in their learning through play with a trusted adult or exploring resources such as building bricks. All children are developing their communication skills and older children ascribe meaning to the marks that they make. Many show interest in books and some respond well to stories and songs. Good opportunities for role-play support the imaginative development of two year olds and early counting skills are emerging for these children. Instances were seen, however, when children were not stimulated sufficiently, when there was not enough interaction between staff and children, or when opportunities to extend their language development were missed. At times, individual children spend time aimlessly with no obvious stimulation before a member of staff notices and connects with them. Only when teaching was at its very best did all children within the under threes achieve their potential in sessions seen. Improving the achievement and development of these children is the main challenge facing the school, especially as numbers in the under threes are due to increase significantly.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Provision for children's personal development is good overall and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good in the Foundation Stage. The attitudes of three to four year olds are very good and most children behave very well. The personal development of children in the under threes is satisfactory. The school works hard to promote the high level of attendance and most parents ensure that their children arrive punctually.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage are happy, their self-esteem is promoted very effectively and they develop very good interpersonal skills.
- The social inclusion of deaf and hearing-impaired children is very good.
- Further development is needed to bring the quality of provision in the under threes up to that in the rest of the school.
- Attendance is very good.

Commentary

6. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children in the Foundation Stage is very good. All areas of the school day are maximised as learning experiences and personal achievement is celebrated very well. Children are happy and motivated because staff are enthusiastic and make learning fun. The child-centred approach ensures children know they are listened to and valued. They have many opportunities to develop social skills, enjoy trusting relationships with adults and relate very well with one another. A sense of wonder is

encouraged and children's feelings are respected. They show a fascination for the natural world and become deeply involved in close observation, for instance, examining snowflakes on their coats and hair, and studying the different colours in bubbles, watching them float away in sheer delight and wonderment. Adults provide sensitive support, giving children time to reflect and marvel. Cultural development is very good because children have many opportunities, through visits out and visitors to the school, to acquire a wide range of knowledge and understanding. The school is ethnically and culturally harmonious: every child is valued.

7. The social inclusion of deaf and hearing-impaired children is very good. They settle quickly into the routines. The very good provision for the personal development of all children in the Foundation Stage and the high quality support and guidance they receive result in their very positive attitudes and very good behaviour. Their self-esteem is raised because their deaf culture is valued. Other children are very accepting of their disability and assist with hearing aids and learn basic sign language, which they use to communicate with each other. Specialist staff for the deaf and hearing impaired are very good role models for all the children because they play a full part in all areas of school life.
8. The quality of provision for children under three is satisfactory. They do not make as much progress in their personal development as older children because provision is at an early stage of development. Only where teaching is at its best are children actively engaged in exciting group activities where their learning and personal development are fostered simultaneously. In these instances, children respond very well, shrieking with delight as they discover new experiences and showing a ready trust in adults. At other times, children tend to play alone or work individually or in pairs with adults. A sense of community is evident only at times in the under threes. Children's behaviour is generally very good but when they are not supervised closely enough, one or two children become destructive.
9. Attendance is very good because children want to come to school and monitoring and promotion are very effective. Absence and lateness are followed up sensitively and supported by the Educational Welfare Officer if necessary. The headteacher is determined to inculcate good attendance habits early on. She recognises that in order to encourage parents to co-operate it is important to understand their individual circumstances. As a result, there is some flexibility in arrival times to coincide with dropping older siblings off at their primary schools. Hence, punctuality is good overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well matched to the needs of the children; learning experiences are not yet planned well enough in the under threes. Care is satisfactory overall and very good in the Foundation Stage and for children with hearing impairment. Partnership with parents and links with the community are very good. Links with other educational establishments are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage and for children with hearing impairment; they are satisfactory in the under threes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Teaching is good in mathematical development, physical development and creative development.
- Learning is excellent in information and communication technology sessions led by a teacher who is a specialist in the subject.

- Specialist teaching and learning for children who are deaf or hearing impaired is consistently very good and these children receive very good support.
- Teaching is satisfactory in the under threes: it is occasionally good but opportunities are missed when children’s development could be promoted.
- Assessment procedures are good in the Foundation Stage and developing appropriately in the under threes.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	5	3	-	-	-

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

10. At the time of the previous inspection, teaching in the Foundation Stage was good overall and a quarter of the teaching seen was very good. It is now good in the school as a whole and very good in the Foundation Stage. The teaching of deaf and hearing-impaired children is consistently very good.
11. Teachers in the Foundation Stage generally have high expectation of children’s achievement. Learning objectives are clearly identified in planning and staff use a wide range of teaching strategies to keep children involved and motivated. Children are encouraged to apply themselves and to take a pride in their achievement, but learning is at the same time a fun experience. Teachers are enthusiastic communicators who pay much attention to developing children’s language development. Questions are used to extend knowledge, understanding and learning, and children are given time to reflect, ask questions for themselves and carry out tasks. Support staff make a very good contribution to children’s learning. They are involved fully in planning and work in close collaboration with teachers. Foundation Stage staff meet at the end of each day to evaluate the day’s teaching and learning, and to identify how children’s interests might be harnessed and their development further extended. This is consolidated by the very good practice of all Foundation Stage staff engaging in a ‘talkabout’ each morning: this involves the teaching and support staff walking around the nursery, discussing how resources and activities are to be used to promote learning that day. As a result, all staff are very clear about what is expected of them and resources are used very effectively to support children’s development.

Example of outstanding practice

Teaching was excellent in a session in the Foundation Stage that used information and communication technology to promote children’s mathematical development.

The teacher revealed exceptionally high expectations and excellent subject knowledge as she taught three year olds how to program a floor turtle to move in different directions. Children sat in a circle, enthralled as they observed how the turtle could be made to move. One at a time, selected children came forward to try to make the turtle travel the correct number of moves so that it stopped beside a familiar location: near a picture of the library, the Italian shop or the station. They received exactly the right amount of challenge and support, which ensured that they persevered, quickly grasping the use of the different switches and refining their instructions as they learnt by their mistakes. The activity provided excellent opportunities for all children to practise and extend their counting skills and to increase their understanding of positional language. The teacher asked probing questions such as, ‘How many more moves does he need to get back home?’ This prompted all the children to use their fingers, to discover that one was left when three fingers were ‘taken away’. The teacher then directed children’s attention to the interactive whiteboard, where she partially covered a number of geometric shapes, asking children to guess the shape from the parts they could see. Amidst much excitement, they quickly identified a triangle, circle and rectangle, then went on to answer challenging questions about the properties of these shapes. The children showed excellent skills of concentration throughout this session, where the school’s information and communication technology resources were used exceptionally well to promote children’s learning through activities that were intrinsically fun.

12. In the under threes, there are pockets of good practice – most often when a member of staff works with one or two children, and very good practice in sessions when the deputy head provides lively and engaging learning opportunities for the children. At other times, lack of structure and cohesion and limited staff awareness mean that children do not always receive sufficient stimulation. Staff are still developing skills in working with the youngest children and in finding ways to challenge the highest attainers. Staffing difficulties – with recent new appointments – mean that they have not yet gelled as a team.
13. The quality of the work by teachers of the deaf is very good, resulting in very good learning and high achievement for deaf pupils. Teaching is always lively and enthusiastic so that children with special educational needs are captivated and motivated to learn. Furthermore, all staff use signing and make very good use of high quality visual resources, many of which they make themselves, to ensure children make rapid gains in language and communication. Teachers, communicators and support staff have a very good knowledge of signing, the development of communication and assessment techniques. They use this very effectively in lessons to ensure children optimise their learning and make very good progress. Mainstream schools also greatly appreciate the very skilled support of staff from the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Service.
14. Strong teamwork between specialist teachers and support staff for the deaf and the rest of the staff ensures that learning tasks, resources and methods are carefully matched to the particular communication and language needs of individual children. Teachers have very good knowledge of how to accommodate the needs of children with special educational needs, including those with varying degrees of hearing loss. For example, they know when to use British Sign Language, when it may be more appropriate to sign English, when to use photographs and other visual references to link new learning to prior attainment and how to adapt particular approaches to changing needs within a lesson. Support for hearing-impaired children in mainstream classes is very good. Teachers and support staff sign consistently and make very good use of visual aids for the benefit of all pupils. This also benefits children who are at an early stage of acquiring English as well as those with special educational needs.
15. Assessment at the time of the last inspection was very good. It is now good overall. Staff assess children's levels of attainment effectively on entry to the school. A pre-assessment sheet is completed and home visit profiles contribute to this. Settling-in observations track the progress each child has made within their first term of schooling and an assessment booklet uses the Foundation Stage 'stepping stones' to give an indication of children's individual progress and attainment. Regular observations of each individual child are part of the daily teaching in the Foundation Stage. All staff work together to record regular observations and contribute to children's profiles. Observations are made across the six areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. The next steps in learning form part of the observation process and samples of children's work. As a result, teachers are well informed about children's individual attainment, and information gained from day-to-day assessment is used very well to inform planning. The school aims to improve staff's understanding of how assessment leads to moving children on: training in this area is planned once a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. The school has identified the need also to provide examples to staff of work that matches each of the Foundation Stage 'stepping stones' to increase their awareness and raise standards. Increasing parental involvement in the development of their children's profiles and giving children themselves the opportunity to add work to their profile have been identified, rightly, as further areas for development.
16. For deaf children, a range of very good assessment mechanisms is used to identify children's degree of hearing loss and their language and communication needs in order to set initial targets and plan a highly individualised, structured programme for each child. Ongoing daily checking of hearing aids and weekly testing using a test box, ensure that children are using every bit of their residual hearing. This enables staff to maximise learning and achievement.
17. A satisfactory start has been made in establishing assessment procedures for under threes. These procedures take appropriate account of national guidance on the areas of development

for this age group. Observations are recorded that show how children are developing and indicate how their learning might be extended. Photographic evidence is being developed. The school is not yet using the nationally produced 'P scales' to measure progress in small steps for under threes or to assess the progress of any children in the Foundation Stage who are not moving systematically through the 'stepping stones'.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good in the Foundation Stage and for children who are deaf or have hearing impairment. It is at an early stage of development in the under threes. Staffing is satisfactory. Accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very well planned to provide a range of exciting learning experiences.
- The school provides very well for deaf and hearing-impaired children.
- The school is developing its provision for gifted and talented children in the Foundation Stage: it is good overall with scope for further development.
- Planning in under threes does not provide enough structure or guidance to staff.
- Although staffing is now stable, there have been some difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, with a high turnover of teachers; staffing has been particularly difficult in the under threes.
- Accommodation and resources are of good quality but space is already limited.

Commentary

18. The school has sustained the strengths found in the Foundation Stage curriculum at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and appropriately based on the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. The curriculum successfully builds on children's prior experiences and their interests are incorporated into planning. Children have access to a wide range of resources supporting all six areas of learning within the indoor area and to a good variety of activities outside. There is a good balance between free activities and those that are led by adults, giving children ample choice within a very carefully planned structure. The organisation of the curriculum places strong emphasis on communication, language, literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good, and well matched to children's needs.
19. Every child is helped and encouraged to take advantage of the full range of opportunities offered in the Foundation Stage. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. A strong emphasis on the development of communication and language permeates the curriculum for children with special educational needs, particularly those with varying degrees of hearing loss. This also benefits children acquiring English as an additional language.
20. There are many opportunities for enrichment within the curriculum: for instance, through the school hosting visitors such as artists or dancers, trips into the local area, and regular visits by all children to a school for the deaf. Special events, such as celebrations and performances, and book days, further support children's development. All this enrichment adds to their knowledge and experience, and families enjoy being involved too.
21. Developing provision for gifted and talented children is a priority in the school improvement plan. The school has not formally identified these children but it has allocated to a member of staff the task of co-ordinating provision. Staff aim to create further challenge by working with the highest attaining children to extend their learning over longer periods of time. Currently, the range of resources provides good stimulation for the most able children but there is scope for some children to be given more sophisticated tasks that promote the development of higher order thinking skills, problem solving and creativity.

22. Curriculum planning lacks structure in the under threes, so that learning is often not focused enough and staff are not as clear as they should be about their roles. National guidance for work with children from birth to three has been used to produce a satisfactory overarching plan. The four areas identified within this guidance inform short-term planning but documented plans are too sketchy. They do not make clear what is meant to happen within each session and how this relates to the development of individual children. An attempt has been made to identify the next stages in each child's development and to relate planning to their interests, but this planning is not systematic. The school is considering introducing the topic system used in the Foundation Stage into the under threes – which should go part of the way towards providing more varied and meaningful learning experiences.
23. There has been a high turnover of staff since the opening of the new building in 2001, partly due to illness and personal difficulties of individual members of staff, and recruitment and retention difficulties in some areas. However, staffing has now stabilised, with only two members of staff in the Foundation Stage on temporary contracts. The new group of staff in the Foundation Stage are committed, caring and enthusiastic, and have quickly formed an effective team. Assuming the management of Brent's Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service at the beginning of this academic year entailed an increase of two outreach teachers of the deaf - who are supporting the school's strategic vision of becoming a children's centre. All three teachers of the deaf are qualified and experienced teachers with additional teacher of the deaf and signing qualifications. There have been difficulties in appointing staff to work with the under threes and some support staff had just joined the school at the time of the inspection. All the staff in the under threes are in the process of increasing their skills.
24. A large, open-plan building, with an adjoining sensory room, a base for teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired, and a conservatory - used amongst other things as a dining area – provides very well for children in the Foundation Stage. The main room is thoughtfully demarcated into separate spaces for each of the six areas of learning. Children have room to move around and explore their environment, and an information and communication technology island is placed at the hub of the room, indicating that it is central to children's learning. Displays reflect children's interests and provide evidence of their learning, as well as encouraging them to interact with resources – which are of very good quality and support all areas of learning. A separate building has recently been added to make provision for under threes, and resourcing in this building is being developed. Although built only a few years ago, the school already provides inadequate storage for furniture and resources that are not in use. This may well present problems as the nursery continues to expand its services.
25. The school provides an appropriate acoustic environment for children with hearing impairment to promote good speaking and listening skills, and displays give equal value to British Sign Language alongside printed text. Very good use is made of specialist facilities such as the very well equipped sensory room and the support base for the hearing impaired. The base is used as a drop-in centre for parents and their children as well as a specialist-teaching base. However, it is currently the only room available for storage and for the administration of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service. As the service grows and develops, with an intended increase in the number of outreach teachers, there may not be enough room to provide for these different functions.
26. The school had very good outdoor facilities at its previous premises, as indicated in the last inspection report. On its new site, it has lost some of its outdoor space through expanding its building to accommodate under threes. The outdoor area for both groups of children is developing: outside provision is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory for under threes. In the Foundation Stage, teachers make very good use of the outdoor area. A wide range of outside activities is organised each day, so that the different areas of learning are supported and children are encouraged to make the most of the varied equipment and materials in their play. The school has very good access to a large grassed area for Foundation Stage children but, because this land is leased by a community group, it is not possible to develop the space.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a good level of support and guidance overall and very good support for deaf and hearing impaired children. Provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of children is satisfactory overall and very good in the Foundation Stage. Children's academic progress and personal development are monitored effectively. The school encourages children's involvement and respects their views very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage and those who are deaf or hearing impaired are supported, guided and cared for very well.
- Induction procedures are very good.
- The inclusion of deaf and hearing-impaired children and the guidance and support they and their families receive is a clear strength of the school.
- Children know their views are highly valued.
- At the time of the inspection, staff in the under threes were due to undertake training in health and safety and were not yet fully aware of the need to be constantly vigilant.

Commentary

27. In the Foundation Stage, all children and their families are valued highly by staff because children's interests are put at the forefront of everything. The ethos that every child matters and that whatever staff do is in the best interest of the children is promoted and practised by the headteacher and is the foundation on which decisions concerning the support, care and welfare of the children are made. Children are cared for very well in a secure, warm and welcoming environment supported by very effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and welfare. Parents express real appreciation for the high level of care their children receive. They say that all the staff know every child well and are ready to hold and cuddle them and support them in every way they can. Support for children's personal development and academic achievement is good because monitoring is thorough and effective.
28. Parents also praise the strong family atmosphere resulting from the good relationships between children and adults. Good relationships are established early because of the very good induction process and each family has their own key worker on the staff. The key workers get to know the whole family through home visits, which have a very positive effect in building children's and parents' confidence. There is a staggered entry system to ensure that each child settles in as comfortably as possible. One or two parents feel that the induction arrangements are too long for children who are already used to being away from home. There is flexibility in the programme but only where the school feels this is in the best interest of the child.
29. The high level of support provided for deaf and hearing-impaired children ensures that at the end of their Foundation Stage year, these children are confident communicators who are able to get their message across to an adult in their chosen mode of communication. Very good systems are in place to monitor the academic achievement and personal development of children with special educational needs, including those with hearing loss. Termly meetings are held with the consultant audiologist and half-termly meetings with other medical professionals and the speech and language therapist to review the progress of all deaf and hearing-impaired children in the nursery. This is very effective in determining new individual education plan targets, which take into account the communication and language needs of individual children and inform precise strategies to meet these. Targets are set and reviewed with children, parents, health professionals and other specialists. Hearing aids are checked frequently and children with cochlea implants are monitored closely. Statutory requirements for the review of statements of special educational needs are met fully, and very good support

from communicators and specialist teaching assistants ensures the care and welfare of these children in lessons.

30. Children know that their ideas are very important and respected because they are encouraged to make their views known throughout the school day. Children feel empowered because the school takes their suggestions seriously and puts them into practice wherever possible, for example, introducing fruit at snack time and the Sunflower Project enabling each child to grow their own sunflower. The school uses 'persona dolls' to encourage children to voice their opinions, to solve problems, and to help them to understand their own and others' feelings. Very good use is made of children's photographs as a learning aid and to emphasise the importance of their role in the school. Children are encouraged to take initiative and, when they do so, staff are quick to praise and to foster further involvement in directing their own learning.
31. Provision for the care, support and welfare of children under three is unsatisfactory because insufficient attention is paid to health and safety. A number of potential risks were pointed out during the inspection. These arose mainly because of a lack of awareness of potential dangers by staff whose attentions were totally absorbed in individual children whilst others played unsupervised or because systems for checking for health and safety risks had not been established. At the time of the inspection, staff were due shortly to attend training in health and safety. Although individual staff are often caring and supportive, the atmosphere in the under threes lacks the warmth and sheer joy of learning found in the rest of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are very happy with the education, care and support their children receive and the school's partnership with parents is very good. Parents' involvement in the school and their children's learning is very good in the Foundation Stage. Information about children's progress and about the life of the school is very good. The partnership through extended services and support for the deaf and hearing impaired are very good. Links with the local community are very good and those with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Partnership with parents is very good and parents are very positive about all the school has to offer.
- The very strong partnership with services and support for the deaf and hearing-impaired are key to very good inclusion.
- Information through reports and consultation meetings keeps parents very well informed about their children's progress; general information is also of a very high quality.
- The school has very good links with the local community.
- Parents of children under three appreciate the provision the school makes; their involvement in the school is good and developing.

Commentary

32. Partnership with parents is very good because the school is totally committed to and highly values its links with parents. Each family is linked to a key worker before the child joins the nursery and this link is maintained throughout the child's time there. This is vital because many children are only at the school for one year, so that strong links have to be established quickly. As a result, parents are very supportive of the school's work and are very pleased with the quality of provision. Parents are encouraged to become as involved as they can. They readily offer skills that can help to broaden children's experiences, and the school has its full complement of parent governors. Parents are made to feel very welcome in school because they have a room made available for their use and are invited to coffee mornings each week. There are signing classes for all parents who wish to attend. Parents know their support and involvement is valued because the school encourages suggestions and takes

these on board. Recent examples are the school notice-board providing planning information for parents, 'wraparound care' to support working parents and a home-school reading scheme introduced following requests made at the autumn term conference.

33. There are excellent links with the parents of children who are deaf and hearing impaired, and since this partnership deals with the needs of children between the ages of birth and 19 years, this link with the school is likely to continue well after their children have left the nursery. Parents of deaf children are encouraged to work in close partnership with staff. At the drop-in, they work with their children and specialist staff to develop their children's language and communication. Parents value this provision very highly. They receive high quality reports on the progress their child is making and know exactly what targets their child has achieved. There are excellent links with outside agencies, such as the consultant paediatrician and consultant audiologist who visit the school each term and examine each individual child's needs in detail. Excellent links are also established with the speech and language therapist who is a regular visitor to the school and who offers very practical advice and strategies for teachers to move children's learning forward.
34. High quality information for parents is key to the strong partnership because it ensures parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress as well as day-to-day information through regular newsletters. Parents are given very detailed, good quality termly reports about their child's progress in each of the six areas of learning and opportunities to discuss these with their key worker. Parents are welcomed into the school every morning and afternoon and encouraged to talk about their child. Staff make sure parents are told on the day of anything important that has happened. A few parents suggested they would appreciate even more information about supporting their children's development at home. Advice is given gradually throughout the year so parents do not feel overwhelmed with too much information at once, at this early stage in the school year. Parents are given a detailed reading pamphlet when their child joins and a very useful parent pack. The school holds several workshops for parents as well as giving written information. These are very well attended but also videoed so that parents not able to attend can still be party to the information.
35. Community links are very strong because the school actively uses the local environment regularly and has several contacts with local institutions for visits and visitors to the school, all of which enrich the children's experience and the curriculum.
36. Links with other schools and colleges are good overall. The school has very good links with local nurseries through the Nursery School Network and the Early Years Network. There are very good links with local secondary schools and colleges through work experience placements, ex-parents on child care courses and nursery nurses and teacher placements. These links broaden the children's outlook by working with adults with a range of experience. Links with local primary schools are satisfactory because they are still developing and this is the only stand-alone nursery in the area. Since taking over the running of Brent's Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service, the school has begun to form strong links with primary, secondary and special schools through outreach support provided by teachers of the deaf.
37. Links with parents of under threes are good but still in the early stages of development because this aspect of provision was only opened in October 2004. Furthermore, most parents of these children work full time so there are fewer opportunities for them to become involved in day-to-day activities. Staff are committed to strengthening these links and they are adapting their approach to fit in with the parents' other obligations. For example, they have introduced a newsletter specifically for parents of this age group, are considering evening curriculum meetings because the coffee morning meetings were poorly attended and giving further encouragement for parents to attend nursery events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and receives good overall support from others in posts of responsibility. Governance is satisfactory: governors provide very good support; the governing body is developing its capacity to challenge senior managers and monitor the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision, high expectations and is committed to making all aspects of provision as good as possible.
- Morale is high amongst staff in the Foundation Stage and teamwork is strong, with children's best interests given central place.
- The newly established senior leadership team provides an improved structure for school development.
- In under threes, there have been staffing difficulties and effective day-to-day co-ordination and teamwork have not yet been established.
- As children attend the Foundation Stage for only one year, there is a high turnover of parent governors – who form significant numbers on the governing body.

Commentary

38. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were very good. They are now good overall because the leadership of under threes requires further development. The leadership of the headteacher remains very good: she is passionate about making the school as good as it can possibly be and effective in inspiring other staff. The Foundation Stage reflects her vision but it is not yet reflected within provision for under threes, partly because this aspect of the school's work is at such an early stage of development. The headteacher has coped with extreme change – a move to brand new premises on a different site, being without a deputy head for much of the time since the last inspection and having many staff changes, in a manner that reveals very good management skills. The fact that she has been given leadership and management responsibility for Brent's Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Service reflects her ability to lead and manage on a larger scale than that of the nursery.
39. The senior leadership team - consisting of the headteacher, acting deputy, co-ordinator of deaf and hearing impairment and co-ordinator of the under threes provision - has re-formed recently providing a much-improved structure for taking the school forward. The leadership team had, until recently, consisted of the headteacher and deputy. However, due to long-term illness over the last three years the school has been led primarily by the headteacher with support from the local education authority. A deputy who was appointed in May 2003 left the school at Christmas and an internally appointed acting deputy assumed responsibilities in January 2005. The acting deputy supports the headteacher very well and is a model of best practice for other teachers. Appointing a permanent deputy head is a priority for the school: the post has been advertised.
40. The new senior leadership team has the potential to ensure seamless provision between the under threes, the Foundation Stage and services. The headteacher, acting deputy and other senior leaders are developing together to become a mutually supportive team. This will enable management tasks to be shared. Teamwork is strong within the Foundation Stage and amongst staff for the deaf and hearing impaired. There is a shared vision, and decisions are made for the good of the children and their families. The roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team are being developed through training, regular meetings, coaching and modelling by the headteacher and local education authority consultant.
41. Leadership and management of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service is very good and ensures high quality teaching, very good achievement and successful inclusion of deaf children. Both the headteacher and the new co-ordinator of the service are providing very

good models for developing provision through, for example, the organisation of very effective training and induction of staff. The teachers of the deaf also provide very good role models for teaching and learning, particularly in the use of visual aids and signing. Highly skilled teaching assistants make a very good contribution to teaching and the development of signing, through for example, the weekly training session in British Sign Language for all staff - delivered by a deaf support assistant. The co-ordinator regularly monitors support for special educational needs children to ensure that up-to-date information on the needs of particular children is disseminated to all staff. She has provided very good guidance to staff on writing individual education plans.

42. The Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Service has recently been re-modelled to support primary, secondary and special schools under one cohesive management structure. It also provides support for pre-school children and babies at home and, as such, offers a range of highly skilled support and advice from birth to 19 years old. The new structure provides greater continuity and a systematic approach to support that has the capacity to ensure progression in pupils' learning. Teachers in the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Service provide very good leadership for the development of inclusion in mainstream schools, which is highly appreciated by the schools concerned. They guide and support teachers in creating an optimum learning environment in mainstream classrooms for pupils with hearing impairment. The schools that receive support from the service greatly value the expertise of the staff.
43. The quality of provision in the under threes is not of the same standard as that in the rest of the school. This is partly because its work in this area is necessarily at an early stage of development. Very good opportunities have been provided for staff to undertake training and to visit other establishments that are recognised for their exemplary practice. This has not resulted in effective co-ordination of the school's own under threes provision, however, and a lack of structure and awareness amongst some of the staff means that children are not always stimulated or cared for as well as they should be. Whilst the deputy head spends part of her time working with under threes and models best practice, there has not yet been enough formal monitoring by senior staff to ensure the quality of education and care.
44. The school is efficiently organised to maximise the opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to learn. Well-established routines and administrative procedures support the smooth running of the school. The school improvement plan is a coherent document that identifies an appropriate range of priorities and the school's work is underpinned by a clear set of policies. Staff and governors are involved in school development, and the school uses information from ongoing monitoring to evaluate its performance and plan improvements. Self-evaluation and reflection are becoming more systematic and structured. Work has begun in supporting new staff in understanding their role within the school and service. A self-evaluation policy is being developed to make roles and responsibilities clearer and to link evaluation and data analysis with improvement planning. Senior leaders meet regularly with their staff team to discuss and evaluate provision. All staff are involved in ongoing self-evaluation: in the Foundation Stage, they hold daily discussions where they reflect on how well things have worked and consider the progress children have made. The outcome of these discussions leads them to inform and improve their practice. Staff have very good opportunities to develop their professional skills further through training that is linked to the school improvement plan and to Performance Management objectives.
45. At the last inspection, monitoring did not include any formal lesson observation. There are now satisfactory arrangements for monitoring teaching. Notes from lesson observations are of good quality and staff receive feedback to help them improve the quality of their teaching. Monitoring has not taken place as frequently as it should, however, because the headteacher has been without a deputy head for much of the time since the last inspection and was herself absent through illness during the past year. She uses assessment records to check the school's performance against the Foundation Stage 'stepping stones' in each area of learning and, along with other nurseries in the local education authority, the school is piloting the use of a computer software package to help it measure its performance.

46. Last year, the advisory body was replaced by a governing body, in line with national changes for the overseeing of nursery schools. Governance is satisfactory. The school is working to address the transient nature of governing body membership because it adversely affects governors' capacity to develop and extend their role. Currently, most governors are new and inexperienced. They are taking part in a programme of training to build their skills and confidence, and all new governors have received appropriate induction training. Most governors come from a professional background and have a good understanding of educational issues. Governors are committed and very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and a few – mostly parent governors - offer substantial time to the school. The headteacher ensures that all governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, direct monitoring by governors is not as well developed as it might be. The link governor system has begun to produce governors with more expertise and the work of the governing body committees sometimes provides challenge for the school, but this aspect of the governing body's work requires further development.
47. Financial planning and management are detailed and thorough. Spending is related to identified improvement priorities and subject to principles of best value. Achievement and teaching are good overall and very good in the Foundation Stage. With the exception of provision for under threes, which is developing, the school provides high quality education and care. The cost per child is similar to that found in many other London nursery schools and the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	386,393.95	Balance from previous year	45,178.79
Total expenditure	365,410.31	Balance carried forward to the next	20,983.64
Expenditure per pupil	4,361.47		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much emphasis is placed on this aspect of children's development.
- Children are motivated and readily develop independent learning skills.
- They play happily together and learn to collaborate.
- The personal, social and emotional development of deaf and hearing-impaired children is promoted very well.

Commentary

48. At the time of the last inspection, many children were likely to exceed national expectations in personal, social and emotional development by the time they left the nursery at four. Achievement and teaching were judged to be good. Children now achieve very well in this area of learning and teaching is very good overall. As a result, some children are already working close to the standard normally expected by the end of the reception year in primary school and the vast majority are likely to exceed this by the time they leave the nursery.
49. Children in the Foundation Stage develop very good social skills because there are many opportunities to share activities and to learn from each other. They co-operate readily, communicating ideas and responding to one another and to adults. They enjoy whole-school activities, such as 'show and tell' and lunchtimes, which reinforce socialising and responsibility to others very well. For example, children take it in turns to lay the tables for lunch and help to clear away. They understand right from wrong and show respect for each other and the staff because behaviour is managed very well and there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere, which promotes a respect for others. Occasionally, less experienced teachers are not firm enough with children with behavioural difficulties but generally these children are managed very well. Children are aware of the school rules, which are reinforced through displays around the walls using photographs of the children themselves to illustrate each one. They were very keen to share their knowledge of the rules for outings on a walk to the railway station, and they all obeyed these rules during the whole trip without having to be reminded.
50. The children are well motivated and engage in activities with enthusiasm and purpose. The open-plan design of the nursery develops in them a confidence to try out new experiences and all children persevere with activities for significant periods of time. They are encouraged to 'have a go' and to learn from their mistakes. This approach raises their self-esteem and develops a very positive attitude to learning. Children are very comfortable talking to adults about what they are doing and eager to share what they have learnt. As their confidence increases, children readily take on more responsibility for their own learning and relish the many opportunities to do so. Children are inspired to become independent learners because of the way the curriculum is organised around their needs and the high expectations of the staff. All the children further benefit because staff closely monitor how each child approaches a task and use this to inform their planning and extension of activities. The intentions behind each activity, and how it might benefit individual children, are shared amongst the whole staff team during the daily 'talkabout'. Children's very good progress and achievement is continually praised and celebrated, culminating in a graduation ceremony before they leave. Photographic evidence shows this is a day to remember for all involved.
51. Children from different cultures play happily together and respect differences. Staff, too, are very good role models as a mixed cultural group working together in harmony. Staff and parents share their cultures and traditions, providing first-hand experiences for the children.

52. The nursery is very effective in raising deaf pupils' self-esteem. Children quickly gain in confidence as they develop very good relationships with other children. Consequently, children with special educational needs including those with varying degrees of hearing loss, make rapid progress towards their goals in personal, social and emotional development. Their development is further promoted by the warm and very supportive relationships all staff have with these children. As a result, children with special educational needs, including those who are deaf and hearing impaired, are extremely happy in the school and have very good attitudes to learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in this area of learning.
- Staff place particular emphasis on developing children's communication and language skills.
- This aspect of their development is greatly enhanced by the teaching and support of specialists for the deaf and hearing impaired.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to write for a purpose and reading is promoted well.

Commentary

53. At the time of the last inspection, achievement and teaching were good and many children were likely to exceed national expectations by the time they left the nursery. Children's achievement is now very good in communication and language and good in literacy. Teaching is very good and most children are likely to exceed the standard expected by the time they move on to reception class in primary school.
54. All staff understand the importance of developing children's communication and language skills as a basis for their overall learning, and interact with them in a way that promotes their language development. They use open questioning and are skilful in intervening in children's play without interfering with their independence. There are many opportunities for informal discussion with the children, for instance, during circle time and at snack time. An appropriate range of focused activities stimulates language development around a theme. Experienced staff link language development very well to children's direct sensory experiences, encouraging children to find words to describe how things feel. The nursery uses role-play very well as a means of developing children's early communication and language skills within a range of contexts. Children listen well and most are confident communicators. Some are very articulate and use language for a range of purposes, including directing play, asking questions, describing recent experiences and events. The development of children's speaking and listening skills is supported very well through the use of visual resources provided by staff who are specialists in working with the deaf and hearing impaired.
55. There are good opportunities for children to develop early literacy skills. Writing materials are readily to hand both indoors and out, and children's attempts at writing are celebrated well through display. Children regularly engage in mark making and most ascribe specific meaning to their marks and drawings. Some children are beginning to form letters; many are at the stage of drawing circles and lines. Higher attaining children can already write their name and some others are beginning to do so. Staff support children's emergent writing skills appropriately by modelling correct letter formation and promoting it as part of role-play situations. Props that support literacy are made available readily: items such as keyboards encourage children to incorporate writing in their play and writing is planned as part of adult-supported activities such as the café – where children are encouraged to note down people's 'orders'.

56. Children are exposed to print through the clear labels and letters of the alphabet displayed throughout the nursery. Signing is promoted very well alongside text and parents provide signs in their mother tongues for displays, books, and tapes. The nursery has a 'book of the week' and a 'song of the week', which are communicated to parents so that learning may be reinforced at home. Reading is encouraged through trips to the library and a 'mini library' has been established within the nursery. Children treat books with care, and concentrate and respond well to stories. Many are able to answer questions about what they have heard when stories are read and talk about pictures in books. Some can predict what might happen next. Higher attaining children can retell familiar stories and many children have a repertoire of songs with which they readily join in, combining them with actions. A home-school reading scheme has been re-introduced following requests from parents. Story sacks and regular literacy experiences within key worker groups promote children's early reading. Many children are able to recognise their name labels and some show an awareness of initial letters in other words. Themed days, including national reading day where children were dressed up as book characters, foster an enthusiasm for books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given good opportunities to develop their counting skills.
- Knowledge about geometric shapes is being promoted very well through use of the interactive whiteboard.
- Staff place much emphasis on teaching children about positional language and apply mathematical learning to real-life situations.

Commentary

57. Children's achievement is good in this area and most children are likely to exceed the standard expected by the time they move on to reception class in primary school. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. At the time of the previous inspection, teaching was satisfactory in mathematical development, whereas it is now good.
58. Following the last inspection, a number of initiatives were introduced to raise standards, including holding family numeracy workshops, and training staff in how to promote mathematical language and use games to develop children's knowledge. Morning circle time focuses on number rhymes, songs and concepts, and the promotion of mathematical language is built into role-play within contexts such as the 'newsagents shop' in the outdoor area, which also promotes much counting and number work. The nursery is well resourced with materials for sorting and matching.
59. Many children count up to about five, some well beyond that. Some children reliably match numbers - for instance, to dots, and higher attaining children have begun to develop skills of calculation, such as knowing how many will be left when one is taken away. Displays encourage children to notice numbers in the environment and they learn about space and measures through playing with sand and water. Information and communication technology is integral to numeracy teaching and learning, and is used extremely well to promote the recognition of geometric shapes. Most children know the properties of simple shapes such as circles, rectangles and triangles and quickly recognise them. Displays, for instance of buildings, challenge children to recognise shapes in the world around them and a sandwich-making activity during the inspection was turned into a very good opportunity for children to identify squares and triangles.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordination of information and communication technology and teaching by the specialist teacher are excellent.
- Children are given many opportunities to learn about the world around them and their curiosity is fostered.
- Parents are active in supporting this area of learning.

Commentary

60. Children's achievement is very good in this area of learning. Most children should exceed the standard expected by the time they move on to reception classes in primary school. Some are already working at the level expected in information and communication technology for children at the age of five, and achievement is particularly good in this aspect of their development. There has been good improvement in this area since the last inspection and teaching is now very good.
61. The school has excellent information and communication technology resources and children gain immense pleasure from the interactive whiteboard. Computers are positioned at the centre of the open-plan nursery, and they are used continuously to support children's development in all areas of learning. The school has programmable robots, a digital camera and camcorders. Staff are gradually gaining skills to make the most of this equipment, with excellent support from the part-time specialist teacher. Children play confidently with remote control cars and walkie-talkies.
62. Children have a very good sense of their place in the wider community. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is supported very well through visitors - including a nurse, postman and fireman - and through regular trips such as those recently to the railway station, shops and allotments. The nursery has staged celebrations for Hannuka and Diwali, and children take part in various cultural events. Last year, they were taken to a theatre at Christmas and took part in a pantomime. Parents and other visitors come in to work with the children and extend their knowledge. A variety of role-play areas and situations are set up by staff to support children's learning about the world: a railway 'track' and 'stations' have been created in the outdoor area in response to children's current fascination with trains.
63. Children know about the seasons and night and day. They learn about living things and have all been involved in planting sunflower seeds and bulbs. They discover insects in the outdoor area and a digital microscope gives them the opportunity to explore creatures and objects in detail. The nursery has begun to make good use of a projector, which enables children to be introduced to concepts such as shadows and silhouettes. They learn about sources of power, such as batteries or electricity, and they are currently fascinated by magnets. Through direct exploration with materials, children are encouraged to answer questions along the lines of 'What would happen if...' Under close supervision, they are given access to real tools for sawing and hammering. In learning about Barnaby Bear, they find out about the countries he visited and the different forms of transport he used.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop skills through activities that involve the use of tools and equipment.
- The outdoor area is used well to promote children's physical development.

Commentary

64. Children's achievement is good in this area and they are likely to exceed the standard expected in some aspects of their development by the time they move on to reception class in primary school. Teaching and learning are good, whereas they were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection: there has been good improvement in this area.
65. Children are confident when engaging in physical activities in the outdoor area, pedalling tricycles and steering them skilfully round the 'road signs'. They explore different ways of using equipment, such as crawling through plastic tunnels or using them to roll over and over, often collaborating to make the most of resources. Positioning of wheeled and other large toys within a context links physical development very well with other aspects of children's development. The school rightly intends to improve its resources to increase the challenge in areas such as climbing and balancing. Nevertheless, children display at least average skills for their age when working with large-scale equipment and boys especially take delight in the freedom that the secure outdoor area provides.
66. A good range of activities and resources promote children's physical co-ordination and this is a strength within this area. Children practise a range of physical skills on a daily basis and, so, show good control in using materials and tools such as scissors, crayons, paintbrushes and when playing with jigsaws and construction toys. Some children have very good control of the mouse when working with computers, deftly selecting icons from the menu and using the various options with great confidence. Staff have a very good understanding of the importance of physical activity to children's overall development and to their developing hand-to-eye co-ordination.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given very good opportunities to engage in imaginative role-play.
- Their artistic development is promoted very well through work with visiting artists.
- Day-to-day opportunities to develop children's skills in art, music and dance could be extended.

Commentary

67. At the time the time of the last inspection, many children were likely to exceed the standard normally expected in creative development by the time moved on to reception class in primary school, and teaching was good. Achievement and teaching remain good in this area of learning and the standards reached by most children exceed what is normally expected for their age, especially in their imaginative development.
68. Children have very good opportunities to develop their imagination through role-play and they play spontaneously with a range of props to support the development of complex imaginary scenarios. Boys and girls enjoy looking after the 'babies' in the home corner, washing dolls, wrapping them in a towel and putting powder and cream on them. They play with enthusiasm in the 'café' and staff encourage them to deepen their use of the 'newsagents shop', modelling ways of using the different resources. Throughout the nursery, props support in-depth

imaginative play and children have excellent opportunities to dress up in exciting costumes for special events.

69. Day-to-day artistic opportunities are satisfactory, but children have had very good opportunities to engage in visual creativity through working with visiting artists, for instance, in a project where their imagery was used to produce exciting large-scale banners. This enabled them to learn about colour and shape. They mix colours and are able to describe what their paintings are meant to represent. They create models with junk material and use objects to represent other things. Some children are very confident in using the computer to produce independent pieces of artwork.
70. Children have good access to musical instruments and opportunities to learn about different types of sound. The school has identified that improvement is needed in creative development, especially in music and dance. The school has hosted a visit by a dancer for Chinese New Year and a theatre, music and dance group have been invited to work alongside teaching and support staff. During the inspection, a member of the support staff led a good movement session but few children became really involved.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Children's achievement	3
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for children	3
How well the school seeks and acts on children's 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	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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