

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HARRINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL**

Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112474

Acting Headteacher: Mrs P Bradbury

Lead inspector: Mrs S E Hall

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> February – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 266959

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 to 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	43 full-time equivalent (83 children in total)
School address:	Harrington Street Peartree Derby
Postcode:	DE23 8PE
Telephone number:	01332 769821
Fax number:	01332 769821
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Fearn
Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> July 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Harrington Nursery is in inner city Derby. Eighty-one children attend on a part time basis and three attend full time. Mobility in and out of the school is high, with one in eight children from refugee and traveller families. Fifty six per cent of children are entitled to free school meals, which is very high. Census information indicates that the socio-economic context of the area is well below average and in the lowest 10 per cent in most national categories of deprivation. There is a wide ethnic mix in the school, with 74 per cent of children speaking English as an additional language, the main languages being Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi. Twelve languages are spoken and 56 children are at the early stages of English. The proportion of children with special educational needs is high, particularly with speech and communication difficulties. One child has a statement of special need and there are additional hours of support for other children with recognised needs. On entry to the school attainment is very low overall and children have skills that are often well below average for their age, particularly in the area of communication, language and literacy. The school receives support from the Small Schools Fund and is linked to a local Sure Start Project and three other community-based initiatives. The headteacher retired at Christmas 2004 and the head of another school is currently providing leadership in Harrington and her own Nursery. This is the first year of a one-point entry, so children start and leave at a younger age than previously.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21750	Mrs S E Hall	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematical development; Knowledge and understanding of the world; Creative development; English as an additional language.
9981	Mr S Hussain	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
25074	Mrs J Cox	<i>Team inspector</i>	Personal and social development; Communication, language and literacy; Physical development; Special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Limited  
Old Garden House  
The Lanterns  
Bridge Lane  
London  
SW11 3AD

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory** Nursery school, which is at the very beginning of a new phase of development. Children enter the school with skills that are at a very low level. Children of all abilities and from all ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The leadership of the acting headteacher is very good and is having a pivotal influence on school development. Management is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The acting headteacher provides very good leadership, with a clear vision for improvement.
- The pastoral care of children is very good, and this enables them to settle quickly and happily.
- Provision for children learning English as an additional language is good and enables them to make often rapid progress in speaking English.
- The planning of activities does not identify exactly what different groups of children are expected to learn in all areas, and particularly in communication, language and literacy.
- Staff do not use assessment information well enough to inform planning in order to provide the highest appropriate level of challenge.
- Support staff, including those with bilingual skills, are effective in supporting children in all areas of their development.
- Links with the local community are very good.
- The work of the governing body is unsatisfactory and they do not meet the statutory requirements placed upon them.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. It has successfully tackled the minor issue—of allowing the children to have greater freedom of choice in activities and has improved the provision for creativity in the areas of art and music. Whilst many areas of provision have remained much as they were previously, the quality of teaching has dipped and the children do not consistently make the good rate of progress that they did previously.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Overall achievement is satisfactory.** Children start the Nursery with standards that are very low when compared to those typically found for three-year-olds, particularly in the area of communication. On entry, many children are quiet and passive and have limited speaking skills in any language. Over half of the children are at the very early stages of learning English.

While standards are below average in personal, social and physical development when children leave the Nursery, children achieve well in these areas. They become much more confident in themselves. Children achieve satisfactorily in all other areas of their development, but their skills remain well below average for their age. In communication, language and literacy many children, including those learning English as an additional language, make rapid progress in understanding English and often in speaking, but to a low level, and the development of early reading and writing skills is limited. In mathematical development, children make broadly satisfactory progress in their understanding of numbers. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is often very restricted and few children show curiosity or an interest in investigating things around them. Children's creative skills develop appropriately in music and art, but they do not develop enough imagination through high quality role-play activities, or express and communicate their ideas very well.

Children's attitudes to learning are good. Their behaviour is very good and relationships between the children are very positive.

**Provision for children's personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall**, with particular strengths in cultural development. Attendance is good, although punctuality is variable, particularly for the morning sessions.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the Nursery is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.** Strengths in teaching are the insistence on high standards of behaviour and particularly the very effective use of teaching assistants, including those with bilingual skills, to support learning. Support staff make a considerable impact on the overall quality of teaching. However, the planning of lessons is unsatisfactory and does not identify clearly enough what the children are to learn and how activities will challenge those of different abilities. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but places too little emphasis on the development of communication skills. Whilst staff take care to fully include all children in activities, they miss many opportunities to extend the children's vocabulary, which limits learning across the curriculum. Provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall, as staff do not use the available information well enough to inform planning to meet the needs of older and younger children and those of different abilities. The Nursery provides very good care for children, including very successful family-style meal arrangements at lunchtime. Links with parents and the community are very good and make a positive impact on children's learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** The acting headteacher provides very good leadership. She has very quickly identified areas for improvement, made some immediate changes to the school environment, and begun work to improve planning, and teaching. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. Whilst governors are supportive of the school and have worked hard during a recent local review, they do not have enough understanding of the areas for further development based on regular contact with the school. They have not produced an Annual Report to Parents since 1999 and therefore do not meet the statutory requirements placed upon them. Management of the school is satisfactory. There is good management of school finances. However, whilst there has been some monitoring of teaching this has often been informal and the school does not yet meet the requirements for managing the performance of staff.

## **PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are generally very pleased with the school, which they feel is very much a part of the local community. A very small minority would like children to take part in more formal learning activities, which inspectors note would be largely inappropriate for their age and stage of development. Children enjoy their time in Nursery and the range of activities they take part in.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should do to improve are:**

- Enhance the planning of lessons so that it is very clear what children are to learn and how teachers will meet the needs of children of different abilities.
- Make full use of assessment information to challenge all children consistently.
- Develop the role of the school governors so that they play a full part in shaping and monitoring the work of the school.

**In order to comply with requirements;**

- Ensure that the governing body fulfills all its statutory duties, including the production of an Annual Report to Parents.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Children's **achievement is satisfactory**. Standards on entry to the school are very low. The children make satisfactory overall progress, and this is good in some areas, but when they leave the school standards are well below average overall.

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

- Children achieve well in their personal and social development and their physical development, although standards are below what is expected for this age.
- Standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are well below average.

#### **Commentary**

1. The children seen in the Nursery at present are younger than those observed in the previous inspection of the school, as they now start and leave at an earlier age due to local re-organisation of schools. This makes comparisons of the standards achieved difficult. The previous inspection noted that the overall attainment of children was satisfactory and progress was good. Children now enter the Nursery from the age of three, with skills that are very low in all areas of their early learning. Although they leave the school with skills that remain well below average for their age generally, children of all abilities achieve satisfactorily.

2. Children initially have very low level personal and social skills. A significant proportion of children are very passive in their learning and prefer to watch others. However, during their time in the school they make good progress and achieve well in this area. They learn to take turns when playing games and most share equipment readily. When they are using the outdoor area, they show good levels of control and are aware of each other's safety. Most settle happily and develop positive attitudes to learning, although they leave the school with skills that are below average for their age.

3. A large proportion of children from all ethnic groups have only limited communication skills in any language, and more than half are identified as at the early stages of English. Assessments of their proficiency with language indicate that a significant proportion are not achieving even the lowest level of language competence on entry to the school. This is a factor inhibiting achievement in all areas of learning throughout their time in Nursery.

4. Children generally listen to adults and other children well and, as their understanding of English grows, they learn to respond appropriately. However, the large majority of children of all ethnic groups have limited speaking skills. Staff miss many opportunities to develop communication skills further, and the planning of activities lacks clarity in how this will be achieved. However, simply by being in an environment where they encounter English on a regular basis, where they are encouraged to respond, and where they have good mother-tongue support, children achieve satisfactorily and some make good progress.

5. Many children have little knowledge and understanding of reading and writing on entry to the school. Achievement is broadly satisfactory in this area, although when children leave the Nursery standards are well below average for their age. Children enjoy listening to stories and many learn to repeat phrases in daily group story times. They are now given free and structured access to mark-making areas, although the use of this is not fully effective. Many children, particularly those

of higher attainment, do not make enough progress because the planning of reading and writing activities lacks clarity and depth and is an area for development. In communication, language and literacy, children achieve satisfactorily overall, although not enough time is allocated to the specific planning and teaching of these skills.

6. On their entry to the Nursery, the children's early mathematical skills are very limited. Their achievement is satisfactory in this area, although when they leave the Nursery standards are well below average for this age. Children now have regular access to a mathematical area where suitable equipment is available. They gradually develop some understanding of numbers, and a small number of higher attaining children can count and match items to 10. Children have ready access to water and sand, which they use with an appropriate range of equipment, thereby developing some understanding of capacity, volume and measures.

7. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world they live in is extremely limited on entry to the Nursery. Many children have little knowledge of anything beyond their immediate home environment and little sense of time or different places. Staff work hard to provide a good range of visits and visitors to extend children's learning and help them develop an awareness of cultures and beliefs. Good use is made of the outdoor area, including activities related to the weather. Overall, children achieve satisfactorily. However, staff miss opportunities to help children develop a lively curiosity, a suitable vocabulary and the confidence to explore and investigate things around them.

8. Children's achievement is good in areas of physical development, although standards are below average when children leave the school. Physical skills develop well in the Nursery because extensive use is made of the outdoor learning area. Children have daily use of the play equipment, even in inclement weather. This helps them develop their physical control and co-ordination well. These skills are also extended by the use of small equipment and tools.

9. Children's creative skills are at a very low level on entry to the school. Overall achievement is satisfactory, although children leave school with skills that are well below average. A strength in this area is the daily organisation of music and singing activities, although unusually more time is spent on music than on developing communication skills. Children have regular access to art activities to enable them to explore media and materials. However, opportunities to develop imagination, to respond to experiences, and to express and communicate ideas through using all their senses are more limited.

10. Children of all ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily. Children with English as an additional language achieve as well as all other groups and, when receiving additional support, they often achieve well. Children of high, average and lower ability achieve satisfactorily, although at times higher attaining children could achieve more. The large proportion with SEN achieve satisfactorily overall and often achieve well when given close support. Boys and girls achieve equally well, although some girls are very quiet and passive learners. Those children who enter the school other than at the usual time make similar progress to all other groups and achieve satisfactorily.

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

Children's behaviour is **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is good. The Nursery has largely maintained standards in these areas of its work since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good behaviour helps children to achieve well.
- Personal development is good because there are many chances for children to think about important aspects of growing up.
- Provision for children's cultural development is very good.
- Attendance is high because of the very good procedures to promote it, although punctuality is variable in the morning.

### **Commentary**

11. Children are happy at this Nursery. They show good levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work. They concentrate very well in lessons and take pride in their achievements. Even towards the end of their daily sessions, they are still keen to try activities such as Bangra dancing. However, many children are initially very quiet and passive and the school has to work hard to help children develop confidence. Behaviour is very good in different sessions and as children move around the premises. The Nursery has achieved such standards of behaviour because staff take the time to explain the consequences of children's actions to them. Rewards such as smiley faces and stickers are used very effectively. This Nursery is free of bad behaviour and no child was excluded in the last school year.

12. The Nursery promotes positive relationships, including racial harmony, very well. The race equality policy is very effective. Consequently, all children play and work together very well. For example, at story time they take turns to speak, happy to let others go first. They share toys with very good consideration for others.

13. All parents expressing a view through the inspection questionnaire said that their children are encouraged to become mature and independent. Children's self-awareness and spiritual development are good. Chances in circle-time discussions and in lessons allow children to marvel at the beauty of the world. They are also encouraged to think about people's feelings such as happiness and sadness. Children have a very good sense of right and wrong. They often consider their own behaviour and basic Nursery rules about kindness, shouting or hitting.

14. Children's social development is good because staff are good role models. Children are taught to respect and care for people and property. They are also taught good manners such as saying 'please' and 'thank you', for example in the well-organised lunchtime sessions. Children know that they are part of a community and are keen to help tidy up after each session.

15. Children's appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions is very good. The atmosphere in the Nursery is one of multicultural harmony. Nursery trips make a very good contribution to cultural development. Much work is done on the different traditions, values and beliefs found in our multicultural society, through story, art, music and dance.

16. Staff keep very detailed attendance and absence records. The Nursery promotes attendance very well by drawing parents' attention to the importance of developing good patterns of attendance. Parents play their part very well by keeping the Nursery informed when there are any difficulties. However, several children arrive late for morning lessons.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Assessment is **unsatisfactory** overall. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Links with parents and the community are **very good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. Whilst procedures for assessment are appropriate, assessment overall is as yet **unsatisfactory** because it is not used well enough to inform planning for individual needs.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching by staff from the local education authority (LEA), supporting children who are learning English as an additional language, is very effective.
- School support staff, including those with bilingual skills, are used very well to support learning.
- Teachers' planning of activities is unsatisfactory because it does not identify precisely what children are to learn across the range of structured activities.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to inform planning to provide the highest level of challenge for different groups of children.
- Staff insist that children behave well and that this helps their learning.

### Commentary

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2	4	10	0	0	0

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

17. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory but has dipped from the previous inspection, when it was good. In the majority of the lessons observed in this inspection, teaching was satisfactory, particularly in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. Where teaching was very good, teachers from the LEA team supported children who are learning English as an additional language. This teaching is very effective because it is well planned, with specific aims to be achieved in the lesson. These teachers make very good attempts to model specific vocabulary and get the children to repeat this in a variety of well-structured activities which interest and amuse the children and offer them a consistently high level of challenge.

18. A strength in the day-to-day teaching of children in the Nursery is the very effective way in which teaching assistants work to give good personal support to individuals and small groups of children. All support staff have high levels of skill. Some are very highly qualified and make a significant contribution to supporting children who speak English as an additional language and those who have SEN. The support staff are an integral part of the teaching team, highly regarded by parents and very effective in enhancing the overall quality of teaching. The school achieves very good value for money from this group of staff.

19. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Whilst staff are very experienced and confident in their skills, this confidence is at times misplaced and some staff struggle to see what makes planning and teaching effective. Teachers, and some in senior support roles, miss many opportunities to extend children's learning further. The planning of lessons is weak and unsatisfactory overall. The daily planning of activities is very limited, and weekly planning is often general and based simply on long-term or previous planning. This does not identify sufficiently well exactly what the children are to learn in each task. Because of this lack of structure, some activities are little more than opportunities to experience the use of materials and equipment, with little

purpose or input from staff to enhance learning. Staff also miss many opportunities to develop speaking skills, as they do not encourage the children to use and repeat key vocabulary often enough for this to become an established part of their communication.

20. Planning also fails to identify how tasks meet the needs of children who make different rates of progress. This has an impact on the progress made by children of higher attainment, whose needs are not always recognised or met through sufficiently challenging activities. Some children have been in Nursery for several months, others only for a few weeks. Planning does not take account of this and is a key issue for improvement. Whilst the school has improved the opportunities for children to make choices in their learning, this has almost been at the expense of staff carefully structuring other activities where they will teach children a range of specific skills in a consistent and progressive manner.

21. The overall quality of learning is satisfactory. Over time, all ethnic groups learn as well as each other. In individual lessons, where they are given very good support, some children with English as an additional language learn very well. Children with SEN achieve satisfactorily overall. Some support staff have very warm relationships with children and make a notable impact on the quality of care provided for those with the most serious forms of learning difficulty. However, on occasions the responses of other staff lack warmth.

22. There are satisfactory procedures to assess children's attainment and achievement. Staff complete initial general observations during the children's first term in the Nursery. After this, teachers and support staff frequently observe children and make observations and assessments of each child's achievements. However, some subsequent records are not sufficiently detailed. For instance useful notes are not always made to enable all adults to recognise patterns in children's play, or how they interact with others, what they are interested in, and how learning can be extended. Good use is made of digital cameras to record special events such as children's birthdays and their particular achievements. However, because these are not dated or annotated, they are of limited use after a little while.

23. The use of assessment information to plan activities to meet all the children's varying learning needs is unsatisfactory. Currently, many children take part in the same activities regardless of their age or ability. For instance several groups are expected to copy their name from a name card, although this is clearly too difficult for many of the younger children, who are just three years old. Assessment notes and photographs are collected and recorded in individual Record of Achievement files, which provide an accurate account of children's learning. However, this is record keeping and not assessment, and it does not indicate to staff what they need to do in order to extend children's attainment and achievement. The Record of Achievement is used to identify any child who may have SEN and to ascertain the competency of those children who have English as an additional language. Teachers and support staff share and exchange assessment information with parents about children's achievements. This sharing of information helps to ensure that staff and parents can work together to teach and support the children.

## The curriculum

The Nursery provides a **satisfactory** curriculum. It enriches children's learning by a **very good** range of interesting and stimulating activities. The **satisfactory** accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of activities and events, visitors and visits enriches the curriculum.
- There are too few planned opportunities to promote children's communication, language and literacy development.
- An exciting sensory room has been created and staff make good use of the outdoor area.
- Parts of the internal accommodation are quite cramped.

24. The school plans a satisfactory indoor and outdoor curriculum, which helps to ensure that all children achieve satisfactorily overall. However, the overall quality of curriculum planning to meet the needs of groups of children of different abilities has dipped since the previous inspection, which identified that it was good. This is largely because the planning to promote communication skills is not a strong enough feature of planning across all the different areas of learning. Children achieve well in their physical development as they have daily access to an attractive outdoor play area. Their achievement is also good in terms of their personal, social and emotional development, as staff work very hard to ensure that all children settle quickly and happily into the Nursery. Curriculum planning in both these areas is good.

25. In daily activities, all children are fully included in every aspect of the curriculum. Provision for children with SEN and those speaking English as an additional language is good, but has dipped in both areas since the previous inspection, when provision was deemed excellent. This is largely because curriculum planning does not identify the specific needs of all groups of children as well as it might. Careful and effective arrangements are made for meeting the needs of children with SEN, including those with severe autistic difficulties. Talented and charismatic bilingual Nursery nurses, who can slip easily between children's mother tongues and English, ensure that the significant number of children who are at an early stage of English acquisition can take part in and enjoy all the activities. The most significant weakness in the curriculum is the lack of daily planned experiences to develop all children's communication, language and literacy skills.

26. The curriculum in all other areas of learning is satisfactory. Curricular planning and organisation have been undergoing considerable changes for the better during the last two months with the arrival of the acting headteacher. For instance, children now have their morning and afternoon snacks at different times and in much smaller groups than previously, thereby allowing increased communication with an adult. The teaching and learning spaces have been reorganised and the wet-play area is operational all day instead of only for a restricted period. Staff are carefully considering the most effective way to adapt the curriculum to cater for the increasing number of younger children, which results from the LEA's move to a single point of entry into Reception classes.

27. An improvement since the last inspection is the increase in opportunities for children to engage in activities which they have selected for themselves. There is also improved provision for music and art. However, apart from daily small-group story sessions and some adult-initiated art activities, too few adult-directed activities were to be seen during the inspection. This restricts opportunities for children to learn new skills or to use newly acquired vocabulary.

28. The school makes very good provision for curriculum enrichment activities. Staff plan many visits to enrich the curriculum. Children have enjoyed, amongst other activities, African dancing, visits from a monkey puppet, Diwali and Eid parties, and outings to places of interest, including to local Hindu and Shiki temples, a country park, and farm visits. These visits make a considerable contribution to the development of children's personal and social skills.

29. There is a satisfactory number of teachers and a good number of very competent and often highly qualified Nursery nurses. The accommodation and the learning resources are satisfactory. The outdoor area is safe, attractive, well maintained, and very suitable for young children. Internal accommodation is cramped in some areas, as there is no staff room and nowhere for staff to speak privately with parents. The acting headteacher has wasted no time in making good changes to the indoor accommodation. She has established a very attractive and stimulating sensory room and has made very good use of a conservatory by turning it into a bright and inviting library.

### Care, guidance and support

The Nursery makes **very good** provision for ensuring children's care, welfare, health and safety. It provides children with **very good** support and guidance. It values children very much and gives them **very good** chances to express their views. The Nursery has maintained the quality of its provision since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- New children settle in quickly because of the Nursery's very good induction arrangements.
- Very good procedures ensure that children feel safe and secure.
- Children form very good relationships with adults because of the very strong family ethos.
- Children feel valued because their views are taken seriously.

### Commentary

30. Induction to the Nursery is sensitive and gradual. All new children are offered a home visit before starting. Children can attend a toddler and family group before they start, and a book library is available. Consequently, children can become familiar and confident about starting life in the Nursery.

31. The designated officer for child protection is well trained and deals with any issues effectively. Other staff are well experienced and all are very vigilant at all times. General health and safety risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with legal requirements. The new headteacher has shown very good leadership by carrying out a full review of procedures. Good practice includes a fresh risk assessment for all visits in the community, before each activity. In addition, there is a requirement for all staff to acknowledge awareness of all health and safety policies. Arrangements for first aid are good. The headteacher is looking to train more staff as soon as possible. As pointed out at the last inspection, the centrally sited toilets are still unsuitable, although changing and washing arrangements have improved. Risks posed by outdoor surfaces have been addressed.

32. Staff know children very well. Personal records are detailed and enable very good monitoring of children's development. Appropriate advice and support are given to all children. Very effective support is provided where English is an additional language. Several staff are bilingual and this is very helpful in supporting children. Outside agencies are very effectively engaged where support in other languages is necessary.

33. Children enjoy very good and trusting relationships with staff. This gives them the confidence to turn to adults whenever they have any problems. A strength is the very effective organisation of school lunches, when children sit in groups and talk to an adult and other children in family-style arrangements. Circle-time discussions are managed well and children are given good chances to express themselves, even though speaking skills are at a low level. It is pleasing to see how many of the children's ideas are acted upon. For example, a building-block play area and outdoor 'home corner' were created recently following children's wishes.

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

Links with parents are **very good**. Links with the wider community are **very good** and those with other schools are **good**. The Nursery has maintained the quality of these links since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good procedures ensure parental satisfaction and deal with concerns.
- Good information to parents enables them to become well involved in learning.
- Very good links with the community help to support learning and enrich the curriculum.
- Good links with other schools ease transfer to the next stage of education.

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher and staff are generally very approachable and are always pleased to discuss parental concerns or complaints. Very good links with parents develop through constructive discussions as carers drop their children at the Nursery and later collect them. Parents are highly valued and their views and suggestions are acted upon, for instance regarding learning resources.

35. Parents are well informed about the Nursery through a well-presented brochure. A newsletter is sent home each term and provides good information about events and dates to remember. The community values the part played by bilingual staff in communications, and many signs and notices for parents are in several different languages. There are good chances for parents to check their children's standards and progress, for instance through consultation sessions held each term. A few parent helpers give their time generously to the school. For example, they help children settle in and assist staff with practical activities. Parents support well their children's learning at home by talking with them about their learning. A few parents want more guidance on supporting learning at home, and the headteacher is considering this. A very small minority would also like children to take part in more formal learning activities, which would be largely inappropriate for their stage of development.

36. Links with the community health service make a very good contribution to children's welfare. For example, staff from the service give very good support to families in individual matters and to parents through the toddler and family groups. Other support is available through the 'Sure Start' organisation. Links with agencies promoting health and safety are generally very good. For instance, the police and hospital staff regularly visit the Nursery and give talks about their work and safety matters. Many Nursery visits enrich learning and support cultural development. These include parks, the seaside, farms, museums and many different places of worship.

37. The Nursery has close ties with other nurseries. For example, staff training events are often shared. Mechanisms for transfer to Pear Tree Infants School are good. Three induction sessions are held at the school and a parent and toddler group operates there. All these links support children's learning.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the acting headteacher is **very good**. Management is **satisfactory**, as are the leadership and management of other key staff. Governance is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher is a very good leader and has very clear plans for future improvements.
- Governors do not monitor the work of the Nursery, nor do they fulfill all their statutory duties.
- Good financial management helps the Nursery to achieve its educational priorities.
- There are no individual targets to improve staff performance.

### Commentary

38. The acting headteacher's very clear vision, determination and sense of purpose have led to many successful improvements in the short time she has been at the school. The new focus on raising standards is already benefiting many aspects of the Nursery's provision. For instance, the acting headteacher has drawn up a three-term school improvement plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the accommodation and curricular planning. She has wasted no time in beginning to achieve her vision. She has, for example, reorganised the accommodation to develop specific curriculum areas, and organised a sensory room where staff can withdraw children who need time to become calm and to receive stimulation through light and texture. A light, bright and welcoming entrance to the Nursery and a new library area have also been created.

39. Strategic planning is good, whereas management is satisfactory because time has been too short to implement and accomplish planned improvements in all the areas identified. The acting headteacher has already completed some detailed monitoring of the school's performance through classroom observations. However, as she has been in post for only seven weeks, lack of time has prevented her from making the identified changes necessary to help staff develop their teaching. The headteacher has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, in conjunction with the staff, is using this information to plan the school's future development. The school improvement plan is good and has been amended and extended by the acting headteacher. Management of provision for children with SEN is good. The teaching assistant with responsibility for SEN is very experienced. She liaises with the LEA staff, who update statements of special need and ensure that the co-ordinator is in a good position to organise the necessary documentation so that links with parents are managed efficiently.

40. The response from parents, staff and children shows that the acting headteacher provides a good role model for staff and children. Her strong passion for and commitment to providing high quality Nursery education for all children, regardless of their gender, race or disability, is evident and strongly contributes to the warm and caring ethos of the school. The leadership and management of the curriculum are satisfactory. However, teachers and support staff have no personal targets to improve their work and this area is high on the priority list for the acting headteacher.

41. The governing body relies too heavily on the headteacher to provide it with information regarding the school's effectiveness and does not monitor the work of the Nursery with sufficient rigour. Many of the governors are new to their roles, and they require training to fulfill their duties effectively now that they have delegated powers and responsibilities. A group of governors worked tirelessly and sensitively in the summer term of 2004 to sort out the staffing changes which were necessary because of a reduced budget. Action has been taken on all the minor issues identified in the previous inspection. However, governors do not fulfill all their statutory functions, as there has

been no annual meeting or published report to parents since 1999. In addition, they do not carry out regular risk assessments and have not ensured that Performance Management arrangements are up to date. There are no planned regular visits to the school, although they do receive regular reports on progress from the headteacher and are aware of its main strengths and some weaknesses.

42. Financial management is good and the school clerk manages the recently delegated budget efficiently and effectively. The Nursery adheres satisfactorily to the principles of obtaining best value for money in order to achieve educational priorities. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	216,618.00
Total expenditure	215,928.00
Expenditure per pupil	5,536.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	5,508.00
Balance carried forward to the next year.	6,198.00

### OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES – THE PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Provision for children learning English as an additional language is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching provided by staff from the LEA team to support these children is very good.
- Bilingual support staff play a very effective part in supporting children and their parents.
- Teaching staff do not plan activities to extend children's communication skills well enough.

#### Commentary

43. The overall quality of education provided for children who are learning English as an additional language is good but has dipped since the previous inspection, when it was deemed excellent. There are currently specific strengths and weaknesses in this area. Staff have a very clear commitment to the full inclusion of children from all ethnic groups and readily welcome them and their families into the Nursery community.

44. The quality of teaching provided by staff from the LEA team is very good. Their lessons are planned very well, with clearly identified aims for what the children are to learn in each activity. Teaching of specific vocabulary ensures that children repeat and become familiar with target words so that they begin to use them with greater understanding, familiarity and confidence.

45. Bilingual support staff are also a very effective part of day-to-day activities. They work with groups of children and many individuals throughout the day. They help explain new words to children in their mother tongue and encourage them to try new words in English. This charismatic and effective group of staff is skilled at prompting even the quietest and most reluctant communicators to have a go, through a combination of encouragement and praise, which raises the self-esteem of the children well. Bilingual staff also make good use of their language skills to liaise with parents at the start and end of sessions. There are very effective procedures for arrival and registration, where all children and their carers are warmly welcomed and given lots of information about what is happening in the Nursery.

46. The main weaknesses in provision for children learning to use English as an additional language are the same as those for all other children, in that there are not enough well-planned activities to develop their communication skills in day-to-day activities. Teachers' planning is very

brief, and is unsatisfactory because it does not identify exactly what children are to learn in carefully structured activities. This results in missed opportunities to develop speaking, reading and writing skills and hinders learning. Planning does not identify how older or higher attaining children are to be challenged, or how groups of children very new to English are to be supported in on-going activities. All staff, and particularly those who are monolingual, miss many opportunities to extend the learning of all groups of children through identifying and using target words to ensure that children build a basic vocabulary in a continuous and progressive manner. Assessment information is not used well enough to identify exactly what children know so that planning can take account of their specific needs.

47. Leadership and management of this area is good overall. The bilingual teaching assistant with responsibility for this aspect is very experienced, knowledgeable and effective in her own work with children. During her lengthy recent absence, her role has been very ably extended by a group of highly qualified teaching assistants. This team of permanent and temporary staffing appointments adds considerable value to the overall quality of provision in the school.

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

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

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

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

- Good relationships make the children feel secure and cared for.
- All staff skillfully and successfully focus on improving children's personal, emotional and social skills so that they move from being dependent to independent learners.

#### **Commentary**

48. The attainment of the majority of children by the time they leave the Nursery is below the levels expected for their age. Nevertheless, children make good progress from a low starting point on entry to the Nursery, and just over half of the children achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of their Reception Year. Children achieve well because of the good teaching, good relationships, and the warm and caring environment into which they quickly settle. Throughout the day, teachers and support staff work very hard to help children develop the attitudes and skills they need for daily life and to help them become increasingly confident learners.

49. Children's personal, social and emotional development is critical to the school's ethos and forms a large part of its work through sessions such as snack and lunchtime. Midday supervisors provide very good support in developing good social skills by eating their lunch alongside the children, and by encouraging good manners and healthy eating in a family-style environment. Children's good achievement in this area is also due to every child being treated as an individual and to the staff's expertise in developing every child's potential. The children are skillfully encouraged to become interested in learning, and to become more and more confident, independent and well behaved. New and very young children and those at an early stage of English acquisition are obviously still heavily dependent on adults, but others have been encouraged to take more responsibility and are confident to work independently on their tasks for short periods.

50. Children settle very quickly at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. They enter the classroom confidently and happily and are encouraged to select one of the activities to play with. Staff welcome every child individually with a smile and a friendly word, which makes them feel valued and happy. On the rare occasions that children are upset, staff support and comfort them quickly and sympathetically. Children feel safe and secure and begin to learn the routines.

51. Children vary considerably in their ability to take turns, but all make good progress in learning to share equipment, as the staff are very good at ensuring 'fair play.' For instance, one child, who is very attached to a particular program on the computer, is patiently and sensitively encouraged to share it with others.

52. There is satisfactory leadership and management of this area of learning. The school has maintained the good standard of provision in this aspect of children's development. It has made satisfactory progress.

## Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The specialist language teacher provides very good support to children who are at an early stage of learning English.
- There are too few planned opportunities to enhance children's communication and writing skills.

### Commentary

53. Children's attainment is exceptionally low when they join the Nursery, as most of the children experience considerable difficulty in speaking, listening and understanding English. Approximately half of the children are at an early stage of learning English and some children with severe SEN have very little spoken language.

54. Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall and children's achievement is correspondingly satisfactory, although attainment is well below the expected level on entry to Reception. Higher attaining children achieve satisfactorily, though at times they could achieve more. Records indicate that by the end of the Reception Year only a quarter of the children attain the expected levels. The children are taught to listen carefully in daily story sessions but, although the majority of children sit quietly and passively listening to the story, very few offer even a single word in response to the adults' questions. On some occasions, the books selected for reading to the children are too complicated and do not appear to be rigorously assessed for language levels, which makes understanding the storyline difficult for young children. In addition, some of the questions asked require only a single word answer and do not encourage spoken language. The planning of activities, as in many other areas, lacks detail in identifying how tasks will meet the needs of groups of children who make different rates of progress.

55. An exception to this is the storytelling sessions with the specialist language teacher, who supports children who are at an early stage of learning English. Children's achievement is very good in her lessons as she uses a wide variety of different activities to promote knowledge and understanding of specific words. The stories selected are simple and very appropriate, and new vocabulary is reinforced carefully with actions and props. For instance, children make considerable gains in understanding cold weather words such as 'skiing' and 'snowman' because they have pretended to ski and to build a snowman.

56. Some staff encourage children to communicate, for instance when making collage pictures. On many occasions, however, children are just given orders such as 'pick your coat up'; and there were few examples of teachers and support staff intervening to extend children's play or to introduce new vocabulary to encourage conversation. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to help children to begin to develop their imagination and language and their understanding of simple grammatical conventions.

57. The acting headteacher wasted no time in quickly establishing a library and writing area to encourage the children to think of themselves as readers and writers, whatever their stage of development. Supplies of paper, pens, crayons and pencil are available, and children readily use them to make pictures. However, during the inspection many children regardless of their age or ability were encouraged to copy their name from a name card. A small number of higher attaining children, predominantly girls, made a good attempt at writing their name but for many this task was inappropriate. As soon as they join the Nursery, children are encouraged to recognise their own names at the daily story sessions and a small number of higher attaining children can recognise their own and others' names. Improvement since the last inspection has been barely satisfactory but provision is improving now under the very good leadership and direction of the acting headteacher.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The newly established mathematics area is a welcome addition to the learning environment and provides children with continuous access to equipment and materials.
- Planning is limited and staff miss lots of opportunities to encourage children to use mathematical language.
- Water and sand are used well to develop children's understanding of measures.

### Commentary

58. Children enter Nursery with skills that are very low for their age. During their time in school, they achieve satisfactorily, although they leave with skills that are well below average. Children from all ethnic groups and those with SEN make satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities. The headteacher has carried out useful discussions with staff from the partner Infant School and has identified that children's mathematical thinking skills are at a lower level than other areas of their mathematical development. This has recently become a priority in the updated School Improvement Plan, coupled with the need to develop a more effective mathematical vocabulary. Overall standards, progress, teaching and learning have dipped since the previous inspection, when they were all good. Whilst there has been unsatisfactory improvement in some areas the potential for improvement, with the acting headteacher driving strategic planning, is clear.

59. Very recently, staff have developed a specific area of the Nursery as a Maths Area. This is helping to develop daily use of equipment to extend children's learning. Working with a teacher, a small number of higher attaining children count accurately a set of small plastic bears, using numbers to 10. Some count further but not always with accuracy in relation to the number of objects. Many average attaining children sort sets of plastic bears into different colours and some put them in groups of the same size or in order of size. However, few can use an appropriate mathematical vocabulary to identify which is bigger or smaller or of middle size, and several children are not able to name colours independently. Children also enjoy informal use of equipment and make satisfactory progress in working out how to place large wooden beads on a frame to make patterns of three.

60. Good use is made of water and sand equipment on a regular basis and the themes of these activities are changed to ensure that the children's interest is maintained. Children with SEN make satisfactory progress when using a sand tray with ramps, pulleys and vehicles, where they enjoy finding out how much sand is needed to fill differently sized buckets. Similarly, regular opportunities to use a range of measuring equipment help the children to make satisfactory progress in their awareness of capacity and volume.

61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The planning of activities is limited and often fails to identify sufficiently what the children are to learn and how activities are matched to the needs of children who make different rates of progress. When working in the Maths Area, staff ask children a suitable range of questions to encourage them to count and compare small objects. However, these activities are often quite short, and staff miss many opportunities to model target words and to insist that the children use a wider mathematical vocabulary in these activities and in day-to-day tasks across the curriculum. For instance, role-play areas, whilst recently improved, are not used to full effect to develop awareness of numbers and mathematical thinking. In outdoor activities, opportunities are missed to look at shapes and, in creative activities, to identify how many items are needed for a group. Many of the children are very quiet and, whilst quite happy to join in sorting items into different categories, they rarely use many suitable words to identify what they are doing in other activities.

62. Assessment routines in this area are satisfactory. Staff make notes which are later added to individual records. However, the use of this information to plan activities to meet the needs of groups of children who make different rates of progress is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory. This leads to a lack of challenge which limits learning in some activities, particularly for the older or higher attaining children. Leadership and management of this area are satisfactory, although there is room to develop more formal monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff make good use of the outdoor environment and visits and visitors to enhance children's learning.
- Children have good opportunities to learn about festivals and celebrations of a range of faiths.
- The planning of activities is weak and staff miss many opportunities to develop children's language skills in this area.

### **Commentary**

63. As in all other areas of their learning, children's skills on entry to the Nursery are very low. Whilst they achieve satisfactorily, standards are well below average when they leave the school. Children have very restricted knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their immediate home environment. They are often very passive and, compared to many three and four-year olds, they show only limited natural curiosity in what happens around them. They have little sense of time and only limited awareness of different places. Overall standards, progress, teaching and learning have dipped since the previous inspection, when they were at least good.

64. The current theme of winter encourages the children to become more aware of the weather and how this affects people's lives. In the inspection, good use was made of the outdoor area for children to find out more about the properties of snow and what happens to this when they tread in it or hold it. They quickly learn that the snow melts but are unsure why, as staff miss opportunities to develop early scientific understanding. Staff make good use of visits and visitors to extend children's learning about different features of the Peartree area and beyond. Photographic evidence shows the children's obvious delight at meeting a range of farm animals. A particularly effective aspect is the way in which the school celebrates a wide range of religious festivals. This enhances children's cultural development as well as teaching them about other beliefs and, through this, extending their knowledge and understanding of some other parts of the world.

65. Children have on-going access to simple science equipment such as magnifying glasses, which a few use with interest to observe different objects around the Nursery. They have ready and regular access to a range of designing and making materials, including construction equipment, although with no specific purpose or target for its use. Two computers are often set up with a story type of programme and one in which children count and match different items. However, as a means for extending children's skills in using the computer this is limited, and there is little planning for the teaching of specific information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Planning, as in many other areas, is weak and very brief and rarely specifies what the children are to learn in any given activity. Because planning is limited, staff do not always make enough of opportunities to teach children a specific skill or enhance their learning through directed tasks with an explicit purpose. Staff also miss many opportunities to extend children's speaking skills. While they ask a reasonable range of questions, they do not identify target words or insist that children use a specific vocabulary so that they become familiar with these words and use them in their daily discussions.

67. Assessment in the subject is satisfactory. Staff make informal notes, which are subsequently added to an individual record of achievement. However, information is not used well enough to inform subsequent planning to meet the needs of different groups of children in order to provide the highest appropriate level of challenge. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although formal monitoring of the quality of provision in this area is inadequate. Improvement in this area has been barely satisfactory since the previous inspection.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outdoor accommodation and resources are good and are used well to develop children's physical skills.
- The children have positive attitudes and behave very well when playing together.

### **Commentary**

68. Children achieve well, and by the end of the Reception Year almost three quarters of the children attain the expected levels in their physical development. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The school gives good emphasis to developing children's physical skills and provides daily access to the outdoor environment. As a result, the children achieve well, though there is scope for teachers' planning to identify more clearly the particular physical skills that the children are to achieve when playing outside. The senior teacher leads the curriculum and provides satisfactory leadership and management.

69. The outdoor provision, which is good and used effectively, makes an important contribution to the children's physical development. For instance, when children are moving around on their tricycles they are learning to negotiate sensibly a route, taking care to consider the needs of other children who are also cycling around or pushing prams. There is a good range of outdoor equipment for children to develop their climbing, balancing and pedaling skills. The children show positive attitudes towards each other when they are playing together outside and are learning to share the bikes, scooters and prams sensibly.

70. In teaching areas, there is an equal importance placed on the physical development of the children. For example, the children are encouraged to move around sensibly, with an understanding that they do not bump into other children, furniture, or equipment. Staff provide a good range of activities for children to develop their fine co-ordination skills. For instance, they are learning to use pencils and paintbrushes sensibly and to control the computer mouse with increasing dexterity.



## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role-play activities are not planned and developed well enough.
- The effective work of teaching assistants boosts the development of children's art skills.
- Staff and children enjoy daily music activities.
- Staff miss many opportunities to develop children's speaking skills in imaginative activities.

### Commentary

71. Children's skills are at a very low level when they enter the school. Because teaching and learning are satisfactory, children achieve satisfactorily in most areas. Overall, all groups of children achieve equally, including those speaking English as an additional language and those with SEN. Whilst boys and girls generally achieve equally there is an especially wide range of achievement for the girls. Higher attaining girls sometimes do well in this area, but some lower attaining girls do not achieve all they could in areas of imagination, as they are very quiet and passive. Overall standards have fallen since the previous inspection, although they have risen in art and music since then.

72. Children have very limited skills in exploring media and materials. However, since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the range and regularity of the art activities organised. For instance, during the inspection there was a daily sticking activity where the children could use a range of materials to make different collages. Good input to these activities from very effective bilingual staff raised the children's interest in such tasks. However, children have very low-level skills in drawing, and relatively few are able to draw recognisable figures for their age.

73. The school has improved the range of music activities since the last inspection, when this was a minor area for improvement. There are now daily activities where staff and children enjoy using a range of percussion instruments, which they do enthusiastically and with reasonable levels of skill. These activities are more animated than many others are, and staff appear to pass on their enjoyment more effectively than in other areas. Children also have regular opportunities to develop their singing skills, although currently these are at quite a low level as children struggle to remember the words and sing very quietly.

74. Many children are very quiet and passive and the school does not plan activities to develop confidence in imaginative areas well enough. Children are not encouraged to respond to experiences and express and communicate their ideas in a sufficiently structured manner. Children's skills in the area of imagination are very low when they leave the school. Whilst they have free access to role-play areas, which have recently been extended, these still lack the impact and vibrancy often seen for children of this age. However, in a story area satisfactory use is made of 'props' and play materials in the shape of an igloo matched to a story, so that children can re-tell the story, take the part of certain animals, and imagine they are in an igloo.

75. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, staff miss numerous opportunities to develop children's speaking skills through carefully structured activities where children meet, practise and become familiar with a selection of target words linked to current work. Assessment is satisfactory and staff make notes, which build to make a Record of Achievement. However, the use of this information is unsatisfactory, as it is not used well enough to adjust the level of challenge for different groups of children. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although monitoring and evaluation of provision have not been effective enough in identifying areas for further improvement.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
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	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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