

INSPECTION REPORT

HETTON-LE-HOLE NURSERY SCHOOL

Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton le Spring

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108747

Headteacher: Mrs P Clough

Lead inspector: Mr C Kessell

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 4th May 2005

Inspection number: 267005

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 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	59
School address:	Brewery Field Hetton-le-Hole Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	DH5 9DG
Telephone number:	0191 5536700
Fax number:	0191 5536700
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A R Wilkinson
Date of previous inspection:	24 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hetton-le-Hole Nursery School is located in the former mining village of Hetton-le-Hole, which is to the south of Sunderland. The school draws its children from an area of private and rented accommodation which is recognised as having high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Most children join school with levels of attainment that are below average. There is a wide spread of ability, but very few higher attainers. Fourteen per cent of children are identified as having special educational needs. Most of the 59 children who attend the school do so on a part-time basis. The school also offers care for children under three and sessional care, before and after school and during school holidays. In 2001, the school received a *Schools Achievement Award*. As a result of the local education authority's (LEA's) ongoing review of Nursery places, the headteacher is seconded from the LEA. Children attend either a morning or afternoon session of the Nursery. The school consists of three class areas that are managed by either a teacher or a nursery nurse. There has been one long-term term absence on the teaching staff. This position is currently filled by supply teachers.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20695	Mr C Kessell	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English as an additional language
12682	Mr J Griffin	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18709	Ms N Bee	<i>Team inspector</i>	The Foundation Stage curriculum

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Consultants Ltd
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 good school with a number of very good features. The children achieve well, have positive attitudes to learning and are very well behaved. Their individual needs are dealt with well. Teaching and learning are consistently good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The Nursery is well managed. The children are very well cared for by all of the adults who look after them. Relationships are very strong. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- As a result of good teaching in all areas of learning, the children achieve well.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is always looking to improve and develop the school.
- Procedures for the children's care, welfare and safety are very good. The children are looked after very well.
- Children's personal development is given a high priority. Consequently, the children work well with each other, have a secure understanding between right and wrong and enjoy being given responsibilities.
- Governors need to become more involved in the strategic development of the school.
- A small number of parents do not ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Improvement since the school's previous inspection has been good. The school has successfully addressed the key issue from the last inspection related to curriculum planning. This is now an area of strength. The school has also continued to make progress in other important areas. For example, the building has been extended to provide childcare facilities and the outdoor accommodation has been re-organised and refurbished. Resources for learning have improved, and the school's assessment procedures have been developed. These developments have also become strong features of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is good. The majority of children join the school with levels of attainment that are below those expected, particularly in aspects of language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. The boys' levels of attainment are often below those of the girls. However, the children make good progress against their prior attainment and most are on course to reach the expected levels in all of the different areas of learning.

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Because of the high expectations and hard work of all staff, the children's attitudes, values and behaviour are very good. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. However, a small number of children regularly arrive at school after the starting time and this is unsatisfactory. These children miss important aspects of the morning and afternoon sessions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Some aspects are very good.

Teaching and learning are good. All staff know the children well and have a good understanding of the different areas of learning. They have high expectations for the children's behaviour and social development. The children are enthusiastic about the wide range of different experiences they are offered. They work and play well together. Staff are good role models. Very good

assessment procedures enable staff to track the children's progress and plan future work that takes the children on to the next stages of learning.

The school provides a broad and exciting curriculum for the children. It is enriched very well by visits, visitors and other activities. The school's accommodation and resources are very good. Parents and children find the school welcoming and supportive. This reflects the high levels of care, welfare, advice and guidance provided. The school's partnership with parents is very good and its links with other schools and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She provides a strong sense of purpose for the school and motivates the staff and children well. The very effective teamwork amongst staff is a strong feature of the school. The governors are supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory requirements. Governors have had full management responsibility for only a relatively short period of time and most of their procedures and committee structures are new. Governance is satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or replied to the parents' questionnaire indicated that they are very pleased with the school and what it offers. They believe that their children make good progress and that behaviour is good. Parents judge teaching as good and state that individual needs are well met and that children are provided with a good range of activities that they find interesting and enjoyable. The inspection team support the parents' views.

The children enjoy coming to school and play and work together enthusiastically.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the governors become more involved in shaping the direction of the school and school development planning.
- Further develop the school's policies and procedures for promoting punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children start school with attainment that is below the expected levels for their age. They achieve well, and by the time they leave the school they are working at the expected levels across all of the areas of learning. A minority of children exceed these levels.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Higher attaining children are challenged effectively.
- Many children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

1. The children's attainment on entry is below the levels expected. There are also differences in attainment between the boys and girls when the children start school. The boys often enter the school with lower levels than the girls, particularly in aspects of language and communication, mathematical development, and personal, social and emotional development. The proportion of pupils identified as higher attainers is small.

2. As a result of consistently good teaching and the effective use of very good assessment procedures, all children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. A number of children come from challenging socio-economic backgrounds that present barriers to learning. However, the school and staff compensate very well by providing very good care for the children and also exciting activities that encourage the children to learn. The children's personal, social and emotional development receives strong attention from all staff and is promoted exceptionally well. The great majority of children make very good progress in this area of learning.

3. The staff use assessment information well to track children's progress and plan for future learning. This ensures that higher attaining children are challenged effectively, whilst those with individual needs are given focused support, experiences and opportunities. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents spoke very positively about this, identifying the fact that individual needs are met well. The inspection team would support this view. Some of the higher attaining children make very good progress as a result of the support they receive, and they leave the school exceeding the expected levels in all areas of learning. The school is very aware of the differences between the boys and girls when they start school and it ensures that focused activities compensate for these differences. The gap in attainment between boys and girls is not so great when the children leave the school.

4. Children with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well because activities are accurately matched to their individual needs and they are all well supported by all adults who work with them. A number of these children have achieved very well in relation to their starting point.

5. The very good relationships and links with parents ensure a smooth start to school for the children. Equal opportunities are promoted well and particular care is given to ensuring that the children develop and learn at an appropriate rate. The children start the school at different times during the academic year, but the staff pay good attention to this. They ensure that younger and less experienced children are provided with a curriculum suitable to their needs whilst the older ones are challenged and extended further, through well-planned activities. This well-organised approach helps the children to achieve well.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children show very good attitudes towards school and to their activities. Their behaviour is very good, and is underpinned by very good relationships among pupils and with adults. Children's personal qualities are very well developed. Their attendance is satisfactory but punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy learning because of the good variety of activities that are provided.
- Children are very well behaved and relationships among pupils are very good.
- The staff use a very good range of strategies to promote appropriate behaviour.
- Children's personal qualities are very well developed; their social and moral development is very good, and their spiritual and cultural development is good.
- Children's punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Most children like their school and enjoy attending. They enjoy a wide range of activities and work confidently with different adults. They become increasingly comfortable working with other children as they progress through the Nursery, and they take delight in new experiences, such as gardening. They identify the differences between dry and wet soils and explore excitedly for woodlice, worms and slugs. Most children select their own activities confidently or follow the staff's instructions with care when this is necessary. They try hard to remember previous work and take pleasure from their ability to answer questions and to please the staff. Most take turns fairly when playing board games. Some concentrate on one activity for quite long periods of time and try their best to complete pieces of work

7. Behaviour in classrooms and during playtimes is very good. Staff set high expectations for children's behaviour, and most pupils are very keen not to let down their teachers or themselves. The reliable behaviour of most children is a key element in the positive atmosphere for learning and social development that exists. Harmonious relationships among children, irrespective of background or gender, are a very positive feature. Staff value children's work and effectively praise effort and good work. As a result, children are comfortable asking questions of staff, for example. This significantly assists children's learning. Both in the inspection questionnaire and at the parents' meeting, parents rightly expressed very positive views about children's behaviour and freedom from any form of harassment.

8. Most children are noticeably calm and consistently well mannered. As a result, staff are able to rely increasingly on children to work sensibly in pairs and small groups. The children take responsibility for their own belongings and Nursery equipment, often tidying resources away when they have finished working with them. They also show a very well developed respect for living things, such as mini-beasts and the African snails that 'live' in one of the class areas. Children who stay at school for their midday meals show a high degree of personal development as they wait patiently for their food to arrive and eat together at tables. Most show good table manners and chat happily to one another and the adults who sit with them.

9. Children's understanding of their own culture is good, aided significantly by the range of visits and visitors. Children gain a real appreciation of aspects of life in other cultures. For example, they sample food from around the world and use chopsticks as part of the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Children get an appreciation of African dance, music and stories from a visitor. Displays cover a range of other cultures. As a result, pupils get a good start to their preparation for life in a multicultural world.

10. Attendance is satisfactory overall. Most children attend school regularly but there is a significant level of absence among a small minority of pupils, especially in the afternoon. Staff work hard to persuade all parents of the importance of establishing a pattern of regular attendance at the start of pupils' school life. Most children are collected promptly at the end of sessions.

11. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Many children arrive late for the start of the morning session, whilst a significant minority are late in the afternoon. Timely arrival to the morning session is adversely affected by having the same start time as the local primary schools, as parents tend to drop off their primary school pupils first. Measures to promote punctuality are underdeveloped.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good overall. The broad and balanced curriculum is enriched very well by a range of other activities. The staff provide very good levels of care and support, and there are strong links with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff know the children well.
- Lessons are well planned and organised.
- Staff have high expectations of the children and are good role models.
- Resources are used well to provide exciting learning opportunities for the children.
- Assessment information is used effectively to track children's progress and plan future learning.
- Children are enthusiastic about their learning.

Commentary

12. Parents believe that children are well taught at the Nursery and that staff meet the needs of individual children well. The inspection team support these views. The good curricular experiences offered by the teaching and non-teaching staff contribute significantly to the good progress achieved by all children. Three classrooms provide well-planned and well-organised activities which ensure that children have a good range of learning experiences that cover the six areas of learning. There is a good balance between activities that the children choose themselves, and then work on together or independently, and activities that are led by adults. Good use is also made of the very good outdoor accommodation. This area provides children with activities that support their physical development and also wider experiences, such as their hunt for mini-beasts during the inspection. Lesson planning was a key issue at the previous inspection. This has been successfully tackled so that all activities are planned rigorously and aspects of the activities are assessed and evaluated by staff on a daily basis. Such is the quality and detail of the planning that it can be easily used by supply staff who are joining the school for just one day.

13. The staff are good role models for the children. They go about their work quietly and calmly, and this has a positive effect on the children's social development. Although the staff have high expectations, they never raise their voices when addressing a child's behaviour or reminding an individual about the school's expectations. A number of children can present challenging and anti-social behaviour. This is always dealt with effectively and with the minimum of fuss. Consequently, the children interact and work with each other successfully, many displaying mature inter-personal skills. On many occasions during the inspection, children were observed offering to share toys or other resources with each other. Classroom relationships are very strong, and the staff are very good at encouraging and engaging the children. Because of this, the children are enthusiastic

about their learning and have good attitudes to work. At the start of each session the children decide what activities they are going to take part in, and their choice is recorded by a member of staff. Towards the end of a morning or afternoon, the children's participation in these activities is reviewed. The majority of children confidently 'discuss' what they have done, whilst their classmates listen politely and sensibly.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 10 lessons

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

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

14. The staff are experienced and have a good understanding of how young children learn. During activities, opportunities are very rarely lost to promote the children's speaking and listening skills or their mathematical development. Other areas of learning are also addressed successfully. For example, during an activity when children were using clay to make 'wiggly worms', a member of staff successfully engaged the children so that they accurately identified that mini-beasts do not have bones. This good review of previous learning then extended into an amusing debate about how the children would be if they did not have any bones. On another occasion, a member of staff used words like 'slither' and 'slide' as the children played in the soft-play area. This effectively promoted language associated with the school's mini-beast topic as well as getting the children to move in different ways.

15. The quality of teaching for children with SEN is good. Activities are well matched to children's differing abilities, and the staff are sensitive to the children's needs and support them well. They develop very good relationships with the children they work with, which results in the children's very positive attitudes to the activities they are offered. This effectively promotes good learning in all lessons.

16. The school's thorough assessment processes are very good. Staff collect and record information on children's experiences and achievement on a daily basis. At a weekly meeting, this information is collated and recorded for each child across all six areas of learning. The assessment procedures are well established and enable the staff to track children's progress, plan the next steps in learning, and target any individual child who has a particular need or has not made the expected progress in any area of learning. Children are assessed when they join and leave the Nursery. This provides the school with a comprehensive overview of the progress children have made in most of the areas of learning. The performance data are analysed and reviewed thoroughly by the headteacher so that strengths and areas for development in teaching or the curriculum can be identified. This is good practice.

The curriculum

The school provides a rich and exciting curriculum which meets the needs of all children. It is enriched very well by a very good range of visitors who are invited into school and by many well planned educational visits.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and organised.
- Provision for children with SEN is good.
- Additional activities enrich the curriculum very well.
- Resources for learning and the school's accommodation are very good.

Commentary

17. The school offers an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum for the children. It embraces all of the areas of learning and maintains a good balance between tasks that are chosen by the children and those led by adults. The provision is monitored carefully so that children experience a good range of activities that are often associated with a topic, such as mini-beasts. As part of their personal and social development, the children make choices at the beginning of the day about the activities they will engage in. Staff give good guidance and the children enthusiastically review their experiences at the end of each session. Personal and social skills are promoted very well, and this enables the children to gain much in independence and confidence. Adults are also adept at promoting skills and understanding associated with language and mathematical development across all other areas of learning. The curriculum has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when it was a key issue for action. The inspection team would support the parents' view that there is a good range of activities that the children find interesting and enjoyable. The curriculum contributes well to the children's good achievement.

18. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of visits out of school and of visitors who come and work with the children and staff. For example, a recent visitor brought in a selection of 'rarer' mini-beasts for the children to observe as part of their current topic. The children talked confidently about this during the inspection. With great humour they related how stick insects crawled up the visitor's arm and how some of the adults were scared of the big spiders. Regular visits to the local area, to experience the shops, library and health clinic, bring the wider world to life.

19. The good support for children with SEN enables them to take part in all activities and achieve well. Their individual education plans (IEPs) are well focused on their needs and reviewed regularly. Parents are regularly informed and, as a result, all adults are very clear about the next steps in learning. This provision is good.

20. The school's accommodation and resources are very good. The accommodation is safe, attractive and child-friendly. The spacious outdoor area is well organised to support most areas of learning. Many of the resources available for the children have been carefully selected and are innovative. For example, each class area is connected by an internal phone system that the children successfully use to improve their speaking and listening skills. All staff contribute much to children's learning. They are very experienced, and also respected by the parents, who acknowledge that they are 'welcoming and friendly'.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares very well for its children. They get very good support, advice and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are right to see the school as very caring.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- Staff provide very good support for children's personal needs and learning, based on a shared knowledge of each child's current stage of development.
- Children are encouraged to express their views and opinions.

Commentary

21. Levels of minor accidents, mainly in the playground, are low. First aid, and health and safety arrangements are clear and effective. Staff teach the children to care for themselves and to learn about personal hygiene, such as washing their hands and eating healthy foods. Good arrangements are in place for child protection and looked-after children. The arrangements for induction, including staggered entry, are very good. The presence of an on-site childcare facility means that many children know the school even before they enter the Nursery.

22. The school provides a warm, safe, secure and active learning environment where each child is valued and very well supported in his or her achievements. The views of parents about their children are very effectively obtained through contacts at the beginning and end of sessions and the termly parents' meetings. Children are closely observed when engaged in activities. Staff use the notes taken in discussions about progress to ensure that planning meets the identified learning needs of each child. In this way, a clear profile of individual progress and growing personal, emotional and learning development is built up over time. Staff give the children very good opportunities to express their views on what they like and dislike about what they are asked to do. Activities are amended to ensure that they meet the developmental needs of the children but also to ensure that the activities are enjoyed.

23. The school has good links with external agents and uses them well, when necessary, to support children with SEN. The very clear documentation that is kept on all children shows how well they are doing. A visiting nursery nurse supports children with specific difficulties each week. She gives good support in groups or individually.

24. The very good relationships between children and their teachers provide a positive atmosphere in which to hear pupils' views. At the start of each session, each child gets a turn to speak and choose an activity. At the close of each session individuals talk about how they got on with their chosen activity. Children also have opportunities to discuss what they like about being at the Nursery. The needs of the children are at the centre of everything the school does.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with its parents. Links with the local community and with educational establishments are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is open and responsive to the needs and concerns of individual parents.
- The range and quality of information given to parents to support children's progress are very good.
- Visits and visitors contribute significantly to children's personal development.
- There are close links with the main primary schools to which the children transfer.

Commentary

25. Parents express very positive views about what the school provides and achieves. They rightly regard the school as open and welcoming. Staff are accessible and approachable, and they share children's successes and any concerns with the parents. The school is responsive to individual parents' needs, suggestions and concerns. It has sought parents' views on specific issues that affect them or their children, such as the support for a Children's Centre and outside play equipment. Regular surveys to establish what parents like about the school and what some parents would like to see improved do not yet form a part of the school's evaluation of its work.

26. The quality of information to support children's learning is very good. Frequent, attractive newsletters give parents regular information on features such as topics, courses and planned visits. Termly parents' meetings keep parents very well informed on children's progress and any areas for improvement. There is very good support for learning at home. For example, with the help of *Sure Start*¹ funding, the 'Talk Talk' bags now cover up to 40 topics, giving parents and children different learning experiences each week.

¹ Sure Start is a government programme involving early education, childcare, health and family support.

27. The school plays its part as a resource for the local community. The on-site childcare facility supports working parents. Close links with the local *Sure Start* partnership give good support to the learning of parents and pupils. Parents take adult learning courses, aided by *Sure Start* funding and the use of the on-site childcare facility. The headteacher is on the partnership's steering committee. Public services, such as the police, the school nurse and the dentist enrich the curriculum with contributions on personal safety and healthy living. A good range of visits includes trips to local shops, the park and the library, and also to the local woods to get the Christmas tree. Visitors, such as a local biologist, enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world with work on insects and mini-beasts. Links with local churches or other faith groups are underdeveloped.

28. There are close links with the main primary schools to which children transfer. Headteachers and other staff meet regularly to work on common issues, such as workforce remodelling and early literacy and numeracy. The school provides work experience placements for secondary school pupils and takes trainee nursery nurses from three local colleges. Plans are well advanced to run some adult courses, such as aromatherapy for adults, with the help of secondary school staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Management is good. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff work as an effective team for the benefit of the children.
- Leadership by the headteacher is very good. She provides a clear sense of direction for the school and carefully evaluates all that the school does.
- The governors need to be more involved in the strategic development of the school.

Commentary

29. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She enjoys the full support of the staff, governors and parents. The school deserves its good reputation in the local community. Parents believe that any issues or problems are dealt with quickly and effectively, and they appreciate this approach. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work extremely well together for the benefit of the children, and this is a notable feature of the school.

30. The headteacher evaluates performance data very carefully to ensure that children are making at least good progress across all areas of learning. If her evaluations identify shortcomings, she takes effective action to bring about improvement and development. When the headteacher started at the Nursery, she undertook a rigorous audit of all aspects of the school and brought together targets for future development. The staff were actively involved in this process and feel ownership of a school development plan which clearly identifies initiatives to improve the quality of education provided. In turn, the headteacher carefully links the continuing professional development of all staff to the priorities of this plan.

31. The headteacher is enthusiastic and ambitious about the school and is keen to be involved in initiatives that will benefit the children's achievement and quality of education. She has been fully involved in the recent developments that have benefited the Nursery, such as the full-day and sessional care now provided by the school. This has brought additional management responsibilities which the headteacher has willingly accepted because of the benefits it brings to the school. The headteacher is a good role model for the other staff. Under her leadership, the curriculum has improved significantly since the previous inspection. On a daily basis, the school runs extremely smoothly to ensure that the time spent with the children is used effectively. Teaching and learning are well organised, as are other functions. The successful leadership and management of the school contribute much to the good progress achieved by the children.

32. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) was absent during the inspection. However, the clear procedures are understood by all adults who work with the children who have SEN. As a result, these children are very well cared for and well supported during their time in the Nursery, and they achieve well.

33. The governors have had full management responsibility for the school for only a limited period of time. They are fulfilling their responsibilities at a satisfactory level, given the short amount of time they have been in operation and their varied experience. They offer good support to the school and headteacher and fulfil their statutory requirements. The governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but they have too little influence in leading the school's strategic development. This process is driven by the staff. Governors also need to be more involved in the school's overall self-evaluation processes.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	160,415.00	Balance from previous year	22,226.00
Total expenditure	122,601.00	Balance carried forward to the next	60,040.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,802.00		

34. The financial information above reflects a financial year when the school and governors did not have a fully delegated budget. The high closing balance is well above the recommended levels but includes funding for building improvements and other grants. The current school budget has been reduced because of a reduction in school numbers. Some of the predicted carry-forward from the 2004/05 budget will be used to maintain historical levels of funding in the hope that the additional childcare provided by the school will increase admission numbers. The governors have only recently assumed responsibility for a fully delegated budget and are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the financial management of the school. Financial budgeting and control are sound and a number of recommendations from the school's most recent audit report are being carried out.

35. With the effectiveness of its provision, the quality of education provided and the progress made by the children, the school provides good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well and the great majority will reach the levels expected for their age by the time they leave the school.
- A significant proportion of the children will exceed the expected levels.
- A strong emphasis is placed on this area of learning by the school.
- Staff are very good role models for the children.
- The children are happy and well settled at school

Commentary

36. The majority of children achieve very well in this area of learning. Those children who exceed the expected levels will have made very good progress against their prior attainment. A number of children join the Nursery exhibiting challenging behaviour. Assessments of the children when they join the school indicate that some aspects of personal, social and emotional development, for example, relationships, are not at the expected levels, particularly amongst the boys. The school places considerable emphasis on this area of learning. The staff provide a stimulating and exciting environment with interesting activities that motivate and encourage the children.

37. Staff expectations are very high. Children are expected to be well behaved and to get on with each other. Any inappropriate or antisocial behaviour is dealt with firmly and sensitively. Children quickly learn what is expected of them, as staff quietly and calmly talk to children about behaviour that is less than acceptable. Voices are never raised. If, for example, children use inappropriate language, they are told, clearly but supportively, that words of that kind are not used at school. The children respond to this firm but fair approach and have very positive attitudes to learning.

38. The school day is planned to encourage children to make decisions, work with each other or independently, and develop relationships with their peers and the adults that care for them. The children become confident as they become familiar with daily routines and are given responsibility. Before 'small group time', when the children decide what activities they are going to engage in during the session, they arrive in their class areas and confidently begin to work at activities with each other or independently. They are polite and say 'hello' to visitors. They are keen to answer questions or talk about their different activities. For example, during snack-time, when the children were able to choose between different kinds of food, they confidently talked about their preferences, identifying apples as more enjoyable than kiwi fruit. The enthusiasm for learning was apparent during the inspection, as the children became visibly excited at activities such as building a wormery or hunting for mini-beasts.

39. The children understand their social responsibilities well. They help to clear up after activities and share resources with each other. Many examples were observed during the inspection. Children in the outdoor area gladly gave friends a chance to ride on wheeled vehicles or share gardening tools. During social occasions, the children readily say 'please' and 'thank you'. While listening to the story, 'Why Worms', the children were able to identify the inappropriate behaviour of some of the characters.

40. Teaching and learning are good. All staff are good role models for the children. The children are treated equally, and staff listen sensitively to what they have to say, taking turns and respecting

the views and ideas of others. Some children display particularly mature behaviour for their age and have made very good progress in this area of learning. They are confident talkers and listen to others politely and sensitively. They show a good awareness of the needs of others and the importance of being friendly and supportive. This was illustrated well when one child, who was accurately describing the life-cycle of a butterfly, noted that the cycle ended with the butterflies flying away 'to find friends'.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Adults support the children well, which enables children of all abilities to achieve well and a few to achieve very well.
- Most children are good listeners.
- The adults provide an environment which stimulates language development well.

Commentary

41. All adults recognise the importance of developing language in all activities. As they do this, they develop very good relationships with the children and, as a result, the children respond very positively to all the activities they are offered. Most children listen well when adults speak or read to them. The children have good opportunities each day to 'plan' activities and then, later, review what they have done. This activity promotes the development of speaking and listening well. However, although most children listen well, many have difficulty in remembering what they have chosen to do, because the system relies only on their oral responses. Higher attaining children generally speak more confidently and ask questions to develop their learning. Most other children either answer questions accurately or are given a good amount of well-focused support. By their actions and facial expressions they show that their understanding of what they hear is progressing well. Occasionally, adults miss opportunities to develop understanding when the children speak. For example, one boy excitedly thought it was snowing when blossom was blowing from the trees. The teacher missed an excellent opportunity to explain what was really happening and why.

42. Teaching and learning are good; children of all abilities are given clear instructions. For example, as the children drew wiggly lines to develop their writing skills, they all listened carefully as they followed the adult's instructions. Achievement was good, as the activity promoted both listening and the development of basic writing skills well. All children are encouraged to identify their name, on entry to school each day, as part of a self-registering procedure. Parents and carers support learning well as they do this. During the children's time in the Nursery, there are good opportunities for them to have a go at writing the letters in their names and develop a love of writing. Areas designated for 'writing' are very well signposted and equipped and, as a result, the children enthusiastically choose to write. Most children pick up pencils, felt tip pens and crayons confidently, and use them with safety and with satisfactory control. Children's previous work shows that they have good opportunities to learn that writing conveys the spoken word. They draw pictures of the characters in stories that they listen to, and adults then write down what they say. At other times they make marks on paper as they develop shopping lists.

43. Children develop a good awareness of how to handle and look after books. They were seen looking at them with obvious enjoyment and responding with great interest to the illustrations as they looked at books individually or as adults pointed to the pictures to develop a more detailed understanding of a story. Information books are used well to promote learning. For example, after the children had dug for worms outside, the teacher used an information book to show the children pictures of worms. In doing so, the teacher developed basic vocabulary well and reinforced what worms looked like. This resulted in the children showing great interest and listening attentively.

Reading is also promoted successfully by visits to the local library and the opportunity to take home 'Talk Talk' bags, which contain activities that support literacy and language.

44. Children are well supported as they use computers to develop basic listening and language. They work through simple programs enthusiastically. Many children use the computers independently and others confidently ask adults to help them if they need it. Adults make very good use of assessment to record the children's progress and to monitor how well they are doing. Most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of their time in the Nursery, and a few children are likely to exceed these levels. Achievement is good and sometimes very good in relation to their starting point.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well and a few achieve very well.
- Adults give the children a good range of opportunities to develop mathematical skills and understanding.
- All children are well supported and, as a result, they enjoy working with numbers and shapes.

Commentary

45. This area is promoted in many activities in which the children take part. The children have many opportunities to develop an understanding of the sequence of numbers as they count objects which they see around the classroom or in the outside area. In addition, the computers are used well to develop counting skills and the ability to recognise numbers when they are written down. For example, adults worked well with children as they counted the number of legs the children wanted to put on their 'monster'.

46. Adults do not miss opportunities to promote number recognition as the children sit and take part in their daily drink and snack time. As they get older, the children begin to develop an idea that if five children are at the table, they need five beakers. In addition, children were seen counting the spots on wooden ladybirds and digging up worms in the garden and then counting them. Resources such as sorting and counting apparatus are very good. Discussions with children showed that higher attaining children confidently use their fingers to show a good idea of simple addition and subtraction. For example, they worked out simple problems such as: 'If you had three sweets and ate one, how many would you have left?'

47. Teaching is good. The adults give considerable thought to the sort of activities they provide for the children and promote well such mathematical language as 'bigger' and 'smaller'. They ask questions such as 'How many?' to encourage the children to order their thoughts and to check how well they are doing. Children were seen using plastic worms to determine which worms were 'the same size' or 'bigger' or 'smaller'. Learning was good. The children took turns sensibly as they enthusiastically and confidently answered questions directed at them. In addition, challenging behaviour was managed well because social skills were developed consistently during the lesson.

48. Discussions with children and analysis of their previous work clearly indicate that the children have good opportunities to develop an understanding of the different shapes they see around them. Most children are beginning to name shapes such as circles and squares. This knowledge has been linked well to their creative development, such as when the children carefully made caterpillars from tissue paper circles. Mathematical skills, as well as language skills, are consistently promoted well, with the result that all children achieve well. Most children are on

course to reach the expected levels by the end of their time in the Nursery and a few children are likely to exceed these levels.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well and a few achieve very well.
- The children respond positively to activities because they are exciting and imaginative.
- The computers are used well to support learning in many other areas.
- The outside area is used well to reinforce learning.

Commentary

49. Teaching is good. The adults plan interesting activities that are cleverly linked to topics. During the inspection, the children took part in many activities, both inside and outside, which supported their study of mini-beasts well. An adult reinforced the need to share spades, take turns, and be kind to living things, and also developed basic counting skills as the children dug for worms. This was particularly well done and, as a result, the children worked maturely and sensibly. The activity was very well resourced, with a good quantity of gardening gloves and spades. Inside the Nursery, an area designated for imaginative play has been transformed into a mini-beasts' home, and the children dress up as ladybirds and butterflies and play with large toys shaped as mini-beasts. This is a very popular activity and, as a result, children begin to name a number of mini-beasts correctly.

50. Children's previous work shows that they are beginning to name the different parts of their bodies. Photographic evidence clearly shows that the children had great fun as they made the homes for mini-beasts with a visitor who was invited into the Nursery. In addition, bright and colourful displays show that the children have used glue, pipe cleaners and recyclable materials to make spiders. Children were observed working well independently as they used Sellotape and glue to stick card, fabric and paper together to make models of their choice, such as buses and cars. Achievement is good overall, with a few children achieving very well in relation to their starting point.

51. Construction toys are regularly used to build models as children work together in small groups or alone. Most children confidently join construction pieces together to build and balance. Resources, such as jigsaws, are of very good quality and the children confidently have a go and complete those set out for them. Visits out of the school, to places such as the library, help the children to notice different features in the place where they live. Higher attaining children notice that they have a number on their front door and they have an idea of the street or town they live in. As they interact with adults, they 'feed' the baby dolls when playing in the area for imaginative play. The children are encouraged to talk about how they have changed since they were little. As a result, they begin to develop a simple idea of the past.

52. The development of computer skills is well planned for, and children enthusiastically choose to use simple programs. Many work independently, and less confident children readily ask for adult help. Children were seen using the computer mouse to move the cursor around the screen expertly as they made the 'Bananas in Pyjamas' characters sing and dance. Most children are on course to at least reach the expected levels, with a few children likely to exceed these levels.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well in this area of learning.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good.
- The use of the outdoor accommodation supports this area of learning well.
- Children are provided with a good range of activities.

Commentary

53. The majority of children start the Nursery with appropriate levels of co-ordination and movement, particularly when taking part in activities such as running, jumping and climbing. However, the children's level of control with smaller objects, such as crayons, is not so well developed. They do, however, make good progress over time and achieve well, learning, for example, to use scissors appropriately and to draw a person.

54. Teaching and learning are good and the children are given plenty of opportunities to take part in physical activities. They develop their physical skills well and also gain confidence in what they are doing. Staff encourage and challenge the children and ensure that they engage safely in the activities. The school has very good outdoor resources to help develop children's physical skills. Children were observed successfully riding scooters and pedalling bikes. They were able to control how they rode these wheeled toys, avoiding obstacles such as Ofsted inspectors and one another. The children are prepared to take on physical challenges such as moving from a three-wheeled scooter to one with two wheels. They begin to understand that their bodies change during exercise, noting that they had become hot after running around outside.

55. Physical development activities are used well to support other areas of learning. As the children moved freely and confidently in the school's soft-play area, they understood the need for rules in this area and that they had to co-operate. At the same time, their climbing, sliding and scrambling actions were linked to the movements of mini-beasts. As the children produced 'wiggly-worms' from clay, cutting tools were used safely, sensibly and with appropriate control.

56. As a result of the good teaching and learning, the very good resources, and the many opportunities to promote different aspects of their physical development, the children all reach the expected levels for this area of learning. A significant number exceed these levels. Activities are well organised and staff pay careful attention to ensure that the children's progress is monitored carefully.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and sometimes very good.
- Adults provide a wide range of activities to stimulate children's creativity.
- Teaching is good and the children are well supported by all adults.
- The children thoroughly enjoy all aspects of this area.

Commentary

57. Most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of their time in the Nursery. A few children are on course to exceed these levels. This is because the adults plan a good range of artistic experiences for all children. In all activities, a good appreciation of children's learning needs enables the children to achieve well. Teaching is good. Children aged three and four were seen using string and paint to make patterns. The adult adapted the activity well to support children of all abilities and encouraged them to choose which colour of paper they wanted to use. In addition, most children had a go at writing their name. Learning was good and was further enhanced by the fact that vocabulary and writing skills were well promoted. All children have many good opportunities to experiment with colour as they use paints and crayons and develop their own pictures. Most children have a satisfactory idea of the names of primary colours, but higher attaining children often name more sophisticated colours such as purple and pink. Children's previous work shows that many children have used the correct colours as they have carefully painted fruits and vegetables such as courgettes and grapes. Children achieve well overall and a few children have achieved very well since starting Nursery.

58. The children love singing and learning new songs. During the inspection they learnt a song that was linked to their topic on mini-beasts. Untuned percussion instruments are well situated in a corridor area, and children confidently and politely take turns to use them. A good selection of resources promotes and extends learning in this area. An adult was seen supporting children well as they listened and played 'soft' and 'loud' sounds along with the music. Vocabulary related to this area was promoted consistently. As a result, the children achieved well and thoroughly enjoyed this experience. Visitors who are invited into the Nursery enhance musical experiences further. A recent visitor brought in musical instruments from around the world and the children experienced the need to 'tap', 'blow', 'shake' and 'strum' them. Opportunities such as these also enrich the children's cultural understanding well.

59. All children engage in imaginative play in the designated areas situated inside and outside the Nursery. Adults miss no opportunity to join children when they play in these areas, such as the one that is set up as a 'Home Corner'.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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).