

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HIRST WOOD NURSERY SCHOOL**

Shipley

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107186

Headteacher: Ms R Morgan

Lead inspector: Mrs J Morley

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 267028

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:	92
School address:	Clarence Road ShIPLEY West Yorkshire
Postcode:	BD18 4NJ
Telephone number:	01274 584368
Fax number:	01274 581569
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Baguley
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> to 7 <sup>th</sup> July 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Hirst Wood Nursery caters for children aged three to five. Currently, there are 92 children on roll; 46 attend full-time. There are three Nursery classes.
- The Nursery has resourced provision for 12 children with special educational needs: the resourced places are fully subscribed, with ten boys and two girls. Three of these 12 children have a statement of special educational need and nine are designated Early Years Action Plus. Their needs include autism, moderate and severe learning difficulty, social, emotional and behavioural difficulty, speech or communication delay, visual impairment and physical disability. The overall aim of the resourced provision is to ensure the fullest possible access to the early years' curriculum, while at the same time ensuring that the individual special needs of the children are met.
- Part-time children attend for two hours daily and full-time children attend for six-and-a-half hours a day. All children attend for at least three terms part-time. In addition, the children born from September to December attend for two terms full-time and those with birthdays from January to April attend for one term full-time.
- Children join the Nursery in the term following their third birthday. They transfer to Reception annually (in September), although the option remains for parents to leave their child for one further term in the Nursery.
- The majority of children are white British but a significant minority are from other ethnic backgrounds, mainly Pakistani. All can communicate in English.
- There are no refugees, asylum seekers or travellers.
- Two children are in public care.
- The school holds the Investor in Children Award (2004).
- It is involved in the Small Schools Fund and the Effective Early Learning Programme.
- It also provides training to other maintained and non-maintained Foundation Stage Settings, both through its partnership with the Early Years and Childcare Service and independently.
- The school is to be redesignated as a Children's Centre Plus in 2007/8.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>3</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>5</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>16</b>

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**This is a good school with many very good features.** Key amongst these is the individual attention each child receives. Staff allow children's interests to drive the innovative curriculum, and they offer diverse and exciting experiences that respond to these interests, while covering all aspects of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The progress children make across the six areas of learning ranges from sound to very good, but it is good overall. Those with special educational needs (SEN) are sensitively integrated into the life of the school, a testament to the commitment to inclusion displayed by all who work at Hirst Wood. The school is very well led by the headteacher, and key staff support her competently. The way in which they constantly evaluate what the Nursery offers, and try to improve it, is impressive. Value for money is good.

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

- Children achieve well and transfer to Reception with standards of attainment that at least meet those expected nationally and often exceed them significantly.
- This is a school seeking continuous improvement, led by the vision and energy of the headteacher and key staff.
- Children's involvement in the activities available is significantly enhanced by a curriculum planned around their interests.
- Children with resourced provision benefit from being very well integrated into the life of the school.
- Teaching and support staff are excellent role models and have a strong rapport with the children.
- The outdoor areas are used in exemplary fashion to support all areas of learning.
- Most facets of assessment are outstandingly good, but two aspects of the curriculum are not formally assessed, and the children's slower progress in these aspects has not been picked up.
- Children are cared for very well.
- Children's experiences are enhanced by the school's very good partnership with parents and with the local community.

When the school was last inspected in 1999 it was advised to provide more detailed planning and precise targets for learning, and to have the playground surface repaired. These areas have been dealt with comprehensively. The school had many strengths in 1999 and it is to its credit that almost all have been maintained and some have been built upon. For example, the use of the outside area has been enhanced and elements of children's personal development have improved, particularly their independence and willingness to use their initiative. Children are now less secure in some specific aspects of literacy and mathematical development than they were. Overall, however, improvement has been good.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

**Children achieve well overall, often very well.** They join the Nursery with skills and aptitudes that vary significantly but are broadly average. They make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. They transfer to their next school with attainment that is well above that typical for four-year-olds in these two areas of learning. They make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, in creative development and in some aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In particular, their verbal communication is very good. However, children's progress in the calculation aspect of mathematical development and in the ability to link sounds and letters is more limited, and this restricts their overall attainment in mathematical and literacy development to the expected level when they transfer to Reception.

Children behave very well, and their interest in the activities on offer is a joy to watch. **Provision for their personal development is very good overall: it is very good in the moral, social and cultural aspects and excellent in the spiritual element.** Children come very happily to school, and their spiritual development is particularly strong because the experiences they are offered relate to what they are interested in and awaken all of their senses.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good.** The curriculum has many impressive features, notably the way in which all elements are covered in the long term, while planning on a day-to-day basis ensures that it responds to children's own interests. The planning for the use of the outside areas is exemplary. In addition, there is a very good range of visits and visitors to enhance children's learning. The school has a good partnership with other schools, and a very good partnership with parents and the community.

**Teaching is good, often very good,** and brings the school's innovative curriculum to life. Teachers take the time and trouble to provide irresistible opportunities for children to learn through play, and the outcome is impressive. They manage successfully to provide each child with a tailor-made experience. Almost all aspects of the school's assessment system are outstanding, and assessment is inextricably linked to teaching and learning, both on a daily basis and in the longer term. The school responds swiftly and intelligently to any assessment information which suggests that a child, group or class should be doing better than they are. However, it is because there is no specific assessment of children's calculation and sound/letter recognition skills that their somewhat slower progress in these areas goes relatively unnoticed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The school is very well led and managed** because the headteacher and staff have a united vision for the school and seek continual improvement. There is absolutely no sign of complacency. They are thoughtful and they look outside their local area for examples of best practice to ensure that what they provide is as good as it can be. In addition, key staff provide support and training to individuals and groups outside the school and, in that way, are influential beyond their own boundaries. Governance is good: although governors have held delegated powers for only a short time, they have undertaken training to give them the knowledge they need to function effectively. They fulfil all their statutory duties.

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

Parents think very highly of the school and, in almost every respect, their views are fully justified. Children enjoy school because the experiences on offer are exciting, challenging and responsive to their own interests. They receive a very 'personal' education.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important thing the school should do to improve is:**

- Ensure that assessment covers all aspects of the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

All children achieve well overall, and very well in several areas.

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

- The large majority of children are on track to exceed national expectations significantly in several areas of learning, including personal and physical development and verbal communication.
- A significant minority are on track to exceed national expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world, in creative development and in most aspects of mathematical development.
- Children achieve less well in the calculation element of mathematics, and in their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make.
- The admissions system does not offer equality of opportunity to all children.

#### **Commentary**

1. When children join the school at the age of three, their skills and aptitudes are very varied but are average overall. The admissions system in place, although earmarked for change in the future, offers very different opportunities to children, depending on their birth month. Typically, those born from September to December stay for five terms: three part-time and two full-time. Those born from January to April receive three terms part-time and one full-time, while the youngest children receive three terms of part-time education. Given that 'part-time' is two hours and 'full-time' is six- and-a-half hours, the older children get greater benefit from this good provision than the younger ones – to the extent of more than three times as much. However, in relation to the time available to them, all children achieve well, and often very well. In broad terms, all are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals and many are on track to exceed them in several areas of learning. The school has maintained the good overall achievement reported at the last inspection.

2. Progress and achievement in personal, social and emotional development are very good because children benefit from a virtually 'personal' curriculum, delivered by adults who know them exceptionally well. It is equally good in physical development, helped by the impressive outdoor provision, where children have a wide range of exciting activities that develop their physical skills and stamina, and plenty of opportunity to use them. The large majority of children are on track to exceed expectations in both areas by the time they leave Reception.

3. Progress and achievement in creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Children enjoy a wide range of experiences, enhanced greatly by visitors, such as an artist and a photographer. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop very well because they have regular access to a range of equipment, including a plasma screen and overlay, a programmable toy, a digital microscope and digital cameras.

4. Progress and achievement in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development are variable. In some aspects, particularly in oral communication, the children achieve very well and the large majority are on track to exceed expectations by the end of Reception. They achieve well in the counting and in the space, shape and measurement elements of mathematics. However, they achieve satisfactorily in the calculation element of mathematics, and in the aspect of literacy which involves linking sounds and letters, an aspect that underpins early reading and writing skills. This weakness exists because these aspects are not identified in the otherwise excellent assessment system, and the shortfall goes unnoticed.



5. The achievement of children with SEN is good and some make very good progress. When children enter the school, teachers carry out a thorough assessment of their needs and ability, and the results of re-testing just before they leave demonstrate the good progress of most. Children's achievements are very well promoted through the daily informal recording of each child's response to learning activities. This enables staff to provide very specific programmes for each child, and it leads to target setting in individual education plans (IEPs) which is exceptionally soundly based. This has a very positive impact on achievement. Children in the designated special provision are, however, only entitled to two hours' tuition each day. This restricts their progress.

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

Attitudes to learning are very good. Behaviour, in and out of classrooms is very good. Personal and social development is very good. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Parents make a good effort to ensure attendance by their children.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very good attitudes to learning, and their willingness to be enterprising is exceptionally good.
- Children enjoy coming to school and relationships between all members of the school community are exemplary.
- Children have excellent self-knowledge and outstanding spiritual awareness.

### **Commentary**

6. Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good, as they were at the last inspection. They are very enthusiastic and eager to learn. Inspectors found that the children are very happy when working either independently or as a member of a small group. Their relationships are very good and this results in cooperative working, as well as helping children to develop friendships. The high quality of children's behaviour contributes to their very good attitudes to learning. They concentrate well and show eagerness when responding to their teachers' questions. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that the school is very caring and encourages children to behave well. The consensus of parents' views was that 'Activities are so stimulating that there is never time to be naughty'. This is the case almost always, although very occasionally children become restless when they are being taught in too large a group.

7. Children are clearly excited at coming to school, and settle in quickly. They are extremely happy to attend and often ask during holiday times when they can go back to the Nursery. A family atmosphere pervades the school and children are consistently well taught. They like being part of the school community and they enjoy the many activities which encourage the development of a more mature character.

8. Children with SEN behave very well. Teachers emphasise the children's personal development in IEPs and have created clear strategies and recording systems to show progress. The children's moral and social development is appropriately developed as they learn to share toys and equipment and to take turns. In a well-conducted lesson, a small group shared a story about 'friends' and used language effectively as they explored what it meant to be a friend.

9. Children's self-knowledge and spiritual development are excellent. Spirituality is nurtured through the rich and stimulating learning experiences and the encouragement for children to reflect quietly on what they have learned. Staff engender a sense of awe and wonder through their own enthusiasm, and by introducing new artefacts and activities which stimulate the children's imagination and engage all their senses. For example, regular visits to Hirst Woods and other places of historical, religious or aesthetic interest provide invaluable opportunities for children to

observe and appreciate natural beauty and the built environment around them. Parents can see how the school plans the development of their children by reading the personal, social and health education (PSHE) guidelines, which are displayed on the notice board near the school entrance.

10. Moral, social and cultural development is very good. Children have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and show this in their relationships with others on a daily basis. Children sometimes spend time sitting together in a circle and take turns to contribute to the lesson by passing a doll. These 'circle time' sessions encourage positive attitudes towards issues of right and wrong and the needs of others, and encourage children to explore emotions. Planning records, curriculum record books and children's 'Records of Achievement' show evidence of children's mature responses.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good, with many very good features. Teaching is good, and often very good. The curriculum is good, as are the school's links with other schools. Links with parents and the community are very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, often very good. Assessment is good overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from very individual attention.
- Children are given outstanding opportunities to develop independence.
- Most elements of the school's assessment system are exemplary, but there are two key aspects of learning that are not made explicit, and children's achievement suffers as a result.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	10	10	2	0	0	0

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

11. The good and very good teaching reported at the last inspection has been maintained. All adults who work in the school are committed to the well being of the children and to working in a way that responds as individually as possible to their needs and interests. They take the time and trouble to find resources that will enliven all the activities they plan. They make exceptionally good use of the outside area, organising experiences that cover all six areas of learning, and giving children the freedom to choose to play inside or out for most of each session. Within sensible limits, children are encouraged to take risks. Children have the option to work in classrooms other than their own if they wish, and older ones use this opportunity. Resources are organised and stored in a way that fosters independence. Corridor displays are interesting, and children are encouraged to handle objects to satisfy their curiosity and to replace them with care. Adults encourage talk and, because they focus on the personal interests of the children, these young people have plenty to contribute or to ask. Adults take time to talk to individuals about their behaviour and thought for others, and they also make good use of stories for these purposes.

12. The teaching of children with SEN is good and sometimes very good. Children receive a high degree of individual support from the teacher and the very well qualified and competent teaching assistant and nursery nurse. The work is carefully adapted for each child so that they learn at their own pace and with as much independence as possible. They respond very well, with enjoyment in their work, and try hard. The staff use praise well to encourage the children and celebrate their

achievements on a regular basis. Relationships are very good. There is good teamwork, and staff and children maintain a trusting partnership which gives the children confidence to try new things and which helps them to make good progress.

13. Overall, therefore, all adults are skilled at what they do. On the two occasions when there was a weakness observed, it was because one adult was working with a large group of children while another adult was tidying up. This was not the best use of resources, because several children were restless and the overall impact of the session was reduced.

14. Almost all aspects of the school's assessments are outstanding. Adults make regular assessments of individuals and, for every child, compile a 'Record of Achievement' covering the time they spend in the Nursery. This consists of photographs of the child engaged in a range of activities, samples of his or her drawings or early writing, and a number of written comments from adults, marking landmarks in the child's development. Together, these show that adults have a remarkable knowledge of the development of each child, and one on which they can, and do, build with precision. When children transfer to Reception, these substantial achievement records are passed to parents. Parents are absolutely delighted with them, and their delight is wholly justified.

15. In addition, in an 'at a glance' format, adults record children's achievement against a range of key skills which cover almost every aspect of the six areas of learning. They use this information exceptionally well to identify aspects in which provision could be improved. The quality of teachers' reflection on what their assessments tell them is exceptionally good, as is the action they take. Because, however, there are two aspects of development that do not feature in this otherwise exemplary profile, children's slower progress in these two areas has gone unnoticed. These are the calculation aspect of mathematical development and the aspect of language development that concerns the linking of sound and letters. In these areas the children attain the standards expected.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good, with some very good features. It is broad and is effectively enhanced by visits and visitors. Accommodation and resources are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Recent involvement in the Effective Early Learning initiative (EEL) has resulted in a curriculum that is capable of responding to children's interest and motivation.
- Provision for children with SEN is very good.
- Visitors to the school, and visits made by these young children, together with their involvement in projects and initiatives, greatly enhance their experiences and opportunities.
- The accommodation and resources are very good and very effectively support the curriculum. Teachers and support staff are well qualified.

## **Commentary**

16. The school has built effectively on the good quality curriculum of 1999. It has recently completed its two-year involvement in the EEL initiative, and has adapted its approach to teaching and learning thoughtfully. Throughout, staff and external agencies have audited aspects of the curriculum; towards the end of the programme, two members of staff produced a very good 'reflective report' on the changes, developments and benefits. The benefits are evident in day-to-day practice in the school, as teachers and support staff plan a curriculum that is capable of responding to children's emerging interests. It is delivered through focused activities relating to the nationally agreed guidance and through continuous basic provision that can be used to extend children's interests and motivation. In the words of an independent evaluator of a recent project, 'Hirst Wood Nursery School has shown a considerable readiness to bring new and innovative stimulus into the classroom.' The one weakness is to be found in the otherwise excellent assessment system. Because this does not cover the calculation aspect of mathematical

development, and knowledge of letters and their sounds, these two aspects receive too little emphasis in focused activities.

17. Children with SEN are fully integrated into the life of the school. As a result, they benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum where they are very well supported and where their sensory needs may be met. They are given a high level of individual tuition in literacy, in speaking and listening, and in their personal development. The resources for children with SEN are good and fully meet the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory. The sensory room is welcoming and well equipped, but the small group teaching room is very small and cramped.

18. The visits for children are designed to link with their topics and help them appreciate the natural and man-made environment. Visitors include specialists, parents and students, who make contributions to children's knowledge and skills in many areas, such as art and animal welfare. Some of these visitors also enhance children's understanding of the music, dance and stories of other cultures. The combination of the regime of visits, visitors, and involvement in projects and initiatives often results in children's participation in extended and challenging activities.

19. With the exception of some old furniture and the need to improve the exterior of the building, resources for teaching and learning are very good. Each classroom has a wide range of good quality equipment and materials that support teaching effectively and stimulate the children. The outside facilities are very good. There is a wide variety of features such as a mini-woodland, a wooden boat, climbing equipment, and grassed and hard surfaces. Canopies from the main building enable staff to plan for outdoor activities in most weather conditions. Teachers and support staff are well qualified and experienced in their roles. They are well equipped to provide support and guidance for colleagues and lead in-house training. Indeed, the headteacher and several members of staff provide training for practitioners from other schools and early years settings.

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

The school's procedures for the care, welfare, health and safety of the children are very good. The support and guidance given to all children is excellent. Children have a very good and trusting relationship with at least one adult in the Nursery.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have excellent, documented records of achievement.
- Pastoral care is very good.
- Procedures for children's induction into the school are very good.

### **Commentary**

20. Each child has an impressive 'Record of Achievement' which shows individual learning plans and the full range of skills acquired. The records show the progress of children and form the basis of teachers' assessment for planning each child's individual learning targets. A sense of pride in children's work is generated because adults in the classroom join with the children to celebrate their progress. The achievement record is regarded as the child's own property and, typically, each child takes great care of it and shows it to parents.

21. The quality of assessment of the needs of the children with resourced provision is very high. Teaching and support staff maintain exemplary daily records of children's response to learning activities and their progress, carefully matched to soundly based targets in IEPs. The children's progress is clearly and carefully monitored. This leads to a high standard of information for the termly review and supports transition to their next school.

22. The school is committed to providing very good pastoral care. Staff are accessible and responsive to children's needs. For example, the headteacher or another senior member of staff is always present when parents bring their child to the door at the start of each session.

23. There are very good procedures in place for the welfare of the whole school community, including all aspects of health and safety, such as risk assessment for visits outside the school. All parents present at the pre-inspection meeting said they were highly delighted with the Nursery. It provides a very high standard of care and a breadth of focused activities. Parents believe it is innovative and creates a very stimulating environment for their children. Inspectors agree.

24. Before children start at the Nursery, parents receive home visits from the school. Parents and children then have the opportunity to visit the Nursery three times during the term before their children join. Parents say that the arrangements are flexible and can be changed to meet their needs. Overall, these arrangements are very good.

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

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community are very good. The school's association with other schools and colleges is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides very good information for parents.
- Very good links have been established with the local community.
- Arrangements for transfer to primary schools are satisfactory, but information about children's attainment is not presented in a particularly useful format.

### **Commentary**

25. The school has become very successful at providing parents with information about their children's learning experience. Outside each classroom, parents can see a summary of learning activities, which is updated every half term. They can also see a more detailed plan in progress for the current week. Children proudly show their parents the samples of the work they have retained in their own 'Record of Achievement' folder. Since last year, the school has provided workshops for parents on a range of topics. For example, parents have been given guidelines on ways to improve learning at home, and explanations of strategies for managing children's behaviour.

26. Parents of children with SEN have confidence that their child is well provided for. There are very good relationships between parents and school staff because of the clear and securely based information that parents receive about their children. Home/school books are well used. Parents are made welcome at termly review meetings and their opinions valued.

27. Parent representatives meet with the headteacher on a regular basis. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents commented that the headteacher is keen to hear ideas from parents. An example of this occurred recently, when the school sent out a questionnaire on school dinners in response to parents whose children are vegetarian. The responses have been fed back to the contractors who supply school meals so that suitable changes can be made to the menu. Parents could not praise the school enough. This view about the interaction between the whole school community coincides with the praise given in an independent report from a well-known teaching university, where the author said, 'I like the way that parents and children take ownership of the school.' Inspectors agree.

28. The school has very strong links with the local community. Children maintain very good mementoes of their experiences in their personal achievement records, so that they can share their learning with their parents. Visits to the locality are often recorded by using state-of-the-art technology. For instance, a digital camera or video recorder is often used. On school trips into the local community, video footage or photographic slides are made and are displayed on a computer screen for parents to see. So, when collecting their children, parents are often treated to a slide show of the day's activities. Quite naturally, they are delighted with these and say that the computer presentation enables them to talk further to their child about what they have done in Nursery.

29. A good relationship is progressively developing with the adjacent primary school, to which the great majority of children eventually transfer. For example, there has been an occasional exchange of teachers between the two schools, and pupils from the primary school have come in to the Nursery to take part in a joint poster project with the Nursery children. However, the attainment information that is passed to the receiving school(s) is not always in a format that is useful to them. Plans are in place to rectify this. Transfer to primary school routinely takes place in September, but a January option is available for children who were born late in the school year, and the Nursery is happy to keep these children for an additional term.

30. The school works well with colleges and secondary schools by providing work placements for students. The Nursery has a qualified mentor who provides expert guidance for teacher training candidates. The students not only gain experience but also provide an additional resource to help in the Nursery.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The governance of the school is good. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's self-evaluation is very good and provides the leadership with crucial information in order to plan for improvement.
- The headteacher's vision is laudable and realistic.
- Strategic planning is based on a wide range of informative sources.
- All members of staff are strongly committed to inclusion and a team ethos.
- Professional development is highly valued and is well structured.

### **Commentary**

33. It is only in the last year and a half that the school has had a governing body with delegated powers. Understandably, therefore, governors are new to the processes of governance. They are keen to learn, and, to that end, have undertaken relevant courses with commitment and enthusiasm, both on governance in general and on areas (such as SEN) for which they have specific responsibility. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and are beginning to understand where it needs to improve. They are not yet at the stage where they are helping to shape its vision and direction. There have been examples, though, where they have challenged the headteacher in relation to planned spending. Overall, they have undoubtedly made a good start and are learning quickly. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties.

34. The headteacher puts forward her vision for the school with enthusiasm and commitment. She views possible changes to the nature of the school as opportunities for development. She is, however, determined that any change should incorporate the quality and inclusive approach that are vital ingredients of the school's current provision. The preparation of the school improvement plan (SIP) is an inclusive process. It incorporates the outcomes of evaluation of curriculum areas by staff with leadership responsibilities in those areas, and it includes formal reflection on the whole curriculum and the professional opinions of staff and external advisers. The headteacher is keen that the views of parents make an increasingly significant contribution. The very good leadership and management reported in the last inspection have been maintained.

35. Professional development in the school is regarded as essential to support its improvement, as well as the development of individuals. Governors receive training as part of overall professional development. In addition to courses for individuals, there are training days for all staff. These are designed to develop areas of the school's provision, such as the outdoor curriculum, as well as to enhance the effectiveness of those with curriculum leadership roles. Further professional development is provided in the regular school improvement meetings, focusing upon whole-school

issues that are included in the current SIP. The school makes a significant contribution to initial teacher training, and those who have recently benefited from placements are unstinting in their praise for the quality of support they received.

36. The school's provision for children with SEN is well regarded by the local authority. The headteacher is active in local early years groups connected with SEN. The provision is very well led and managed by an energetic co-ordinator, who ensures that children's individual needs are very well assessed and recorded and that teaching is of a consistently high quality.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	321,625
Total expenditure	308,342
Expenditure per pupil	4,816

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	10,254
Balance carried forward to the next	23,637

37. The carry over figure includes amounts that were unexpectedly given to Nursery schools at the end of the process of devolution of budgets. This is an acceptable explanation for a larger than normal carry over.

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

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

Provision is **good** in the Foundation Stage.

38. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly average. Overall, children achieve well, and by the time they leave they reach standards that range from those that are in line with national expectations to those that are well above. Achievement in aspects of physical development and personal, social and emotional development is particularly good, because adults plan a good range of indoor and outdoor activities and make sure children take full advantage of the challenging equipment and resources. Teaching is good, with some very good features. Adults give high priority to children's personal, social and emotional development, which results in children being independent and well able to make choices about what they do. All children, including those who have SEN, are well supported and fully included. Planning is detailed and links well to the established assessment procedures. However, there are some gaps in assessment procedures, with the result that some aspects of provision receive too little attention. Adults know children particularly well and allocate time throughout the day to observe and record their progress. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable and experienced. Very good leadership and management have ensured that both the indoor and outdoor curricula are well developed and that adult intervention is sensitive to children's individual needs.

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

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

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

- Very good relationships between children and adults create an effective learning environment.
- Well-planned activities motivate children to learn.
- Behaviour is good when the group size is appropriate.

#### **Commentary**

39. This area of learning receives a high profile and children achieve very well. They make very good progress and the majority well exceed the expected level. This is due to vigilant and caring staff, who are very good role models. The well planned and inspiring environment helps children to settle well to the tasks they choose. Adults place strong emphasis on each child's individual style of learning. Activities challenge children and they are motivated to learn, whether it is about going on an *aeroplane journey* or making models with 'found' materials. Very good teaching, using puppets, improves children's emotional and social development. For example, children are encouraged to talk about important issues, such as how it feels to be ignored and left out. At all times adults reinforce the message of kindness by encouraging children to share resources and to take turns. Timers are used well, so children are clear about fairness.

40. Adults place strong emphasis on children being independent. Children are expected to make choices when playing and to be responsible when clearing resources away at the end of the session. At all times, adults intervene sensitively and help children to improve their concentration. Children show pride in all they do. They willingly show how well they climb and balance, and happily talk about their artwork.



41. Most children behave very well and follow rules and routines well. They sit quietly with their group and pay good attention. At times, however, when the group is too large, some lose concentration and do not listen to the teacher. Children develop respect for their own culture and the cultures of others through various planned themes. Dressing-up clothes and resources reflect the multicultural society in which we live.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's speaking and listening skills.
- Books are used well to inspire interesting activities.
- Adults do not give enough attention to early reading and writing skills.

### **Commentary**

42. Teaching is sound overall and children achieve steadily. The majority are working at the expected level overall. Children develop good speaking and listening skills; this has a significant impact on their learning. Adults teach children a good range of rhymes. When reading stories such as *Love You Forever*, adults place strong emphasis on listening skills. Children are encouraged to repeat familiar refrains in the story, and the constant interaction and involvement improve understanding and concentration. Adults question children skilfully so that they have to answer in sentences. They make sure children look carefully at the picture clues. Staff support children's development of language during activities and teach them a good range of new words. For example, they learn the names of many different fruits linked to *Handa's Surprise*.

43. Books are always accessible to children. They enjoy browsing and turn pages correctly. More able children confidently explain how some pictures cover two pages, so the book has to be turned round to be seen properly. Some children are well aware that print in books tells the story.

44. Children express their ideas when they draw detailed pictures. Many children write as they play. They take *orders for travel tickets* and write labels on the boat and the aeroplane. They are learning to write their names, using their cards to help them. Planning does not include enough practical activities to help children recognise sounds in letters and words. Letters and writing are not displayed sufficiently to assist those who are ready to learn. Children therefore do not achieve as well as they could in this aspect of the area of learning. Children have good eye-to-hand co-ordination and most hold writing tools correctly.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching places a strong emphasis on counting in everyday situations.
- Children's achievement in calculation is lower than in the other two aspects of mathematical development.
- Good emphasis is given to mathematical language, and children progress well in their understanding.

## Commentary

45. The sound quality of teaching and practical activities help children to achieve steadily, and the majority are working at the expected level overall. Good teaching in early counting skills and number recognition results in children achieving well in this aspect of mathematics. This is because planning makes sure that children have regular counting opportunities. For example, when the children play a game with dice and ladybirds, adults make sure that they count the spots and find the right number. When children thread beads, adults encourage them to count well beyond 10. Some children copy numbers accurately.

46. Calculating skills are not developed enough. This is because this aspect of mathematics does not feature in assessments, and staff are not as aware as they should be of how well children are doing. Children are therefore not making enough progress in this aspect of mathematics. A minority are beginning to understand what 'one more' and 'two more' means, for example when playing computer games. During the inspection, number lines were not in evidence in all classrooms, a means by which children find out how numbers follow on from each other or identify one more or one less in a number sequence.

47. Children learn positional words as they play outdoors. For example, they proudly show adults how to hang *upside down* on the apparatus and they crawl *through* tunnels and run *over* the bridge. They know that a pineapple is bigger than an orange. They understand that some objects are longer than others and enjoy using large solid shapes to build models outdoors. More able children draw rectangular buildings with square windows. They know that an item is heavy if the scales or the seesaw go down. They make simple repeating patterns with beads and pegs.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching provides the children with countless opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Very good use of ICT results in children achieving well.
- The school provides a range of visits and visitors to enrich learning.

## Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are good; therefore, all children achieve well. Many are working above the expected level. Children are provided with a very good range of indoor and outdoor opportunities to find out about their world for themselves. Opportunities for learning outdoors are very well developed, and adults plan daily activities to secure children's understanding. They invite parents to help with the vegetable patch alongside their children. They encourage children to investigate and explore by setting up displays which invite children to look carefully through microscopes to see patterns, changes and differences in natural objects. In a focused teaching session, adults helped children to find out what could be done to change ice back into water. Visits and visitors expand children's knowledge. Children go for seasonal walks in the woods, and photographs show how much they enjoyed being among the autumn leaves. The 'Zoo Lab' recently visited the Nursery and children were able to observe and sometimes handle creatures such as large African land snails, rats and guinea pigs. Resources are varied and are readily available to teach children how to use a variety of tools in their work. The children are helped to make a kite, using paper, tape and string, and they find out what they have to do to make it fly. All children show confidence and skill when using glue and tape to join items together. This is because they have daily opportunities to improve their skills and are well supported by adults as they learn.

49. The school has recently acquired a plasma screen and overlay, which is popular with children. They show confidence and skill in its use. Most use the arrow keys with increasing accuracy and control. They also show good control by touching the plasma screen. Children also use a 'pixie robot' to move across a grid. This helps them understand the reasons for counting and turning in different directions. They are familiar with using digital cameras.

50. Children show an interest in the world in which they live. They are encouraged to talk about their family and the places they visit with them. They learn about different locations through play. For example, adults set up small scenarios of beach scenes or desert landscapes and play alongside children using small creatures. When listening to *Handa's Surprise*, the children recognise that the story does not take place in England because, in the story, people carry goods on their heads. Children gain an increasing awareness of different cultures and the beliefs of others, because resources are readily available and activities to promote understanding are planned throughout the year.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in large movement skills because they have regular access to challenging equipment outdoors.
- There are very good opportunities to develop children's fine finger skills through other areas of the curriculum.

### Commentary

51. Teaching is very good overall, with the result that children achieve very well when developing their large movement skills. Many show skills well above the expected level in this aspect of physical development. Staff regularly take children outside into a well organised and attractive play area. Here, the children master the art of crawling through tunnels and learn how to jump, hop, balance and climb. They play with small equipment and learn how to throw and kick balls. They use wheeled apparatus with increasing skill and manage to pedal and stop quickly when necessary, negotiating very well around each other. The slide challenges them well and many use alternate feet to climb up. Children have good opportunities to run vigorously and to play with a good range of equipment. Large wooden blocks, cartons and fabric are used to construct an extensive range of buildings and models, and children skilfully transport these from one place to another. This area of learning has a regular focus for teachers' planning, and adults give specific attention to developing children's skills. This has a significant impact on children's physical achievements.

52. Children develop their fine finger skills well to control brushes, glue spreaders and scissors, and they use their skills when painting and model-making. They know how to fold paper and cut out a square to make a frame. They learn to pour liquid from one container into another and enjoy playing with water and wet and dry sand. They manipulate dough and make models with clay, and they use rolling pins and cutters, thread beads, and handle very small pegs. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle and children enjoy fresh fruit and milk. They know when they need to wash hands and that physical activity is good for you.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching of direct skills is combined with good opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Children are provided with an extensive range of resources that enriches their learning.

### Commentary

53. Staff plan a wide range of stimulating activities and, with good teaching and high levels of support, the children achieve well. Many are working above the expected level for their age. The children need a lot of help to learn important skills when they first start Nursery, and therefore adults give plenty of time to the direct teaching of specific skills, along with very good opportunities for play. The children are taught, for example, the skills needed to mix paint and use brushes to express their ideas in pictures of animals. They know yellow and blue can be mixed to make green. They quickly learn how to use scissors, tape and glue with confidence to make models of their own choosing. Adults give very good attention to role-play and children happily become involved in a role in the *vet's surgery*, where they give their pets *medicine* to make them feel better. They make their own scenery, such as an aeroplane and flight deck controls, when acting out holiday journeys. Adults become fully involved in imaginative roles and children learn to be creative and imaginative as they play. They often make up their own stories with *small people* and puppets.

54. The extensive range of creative materials available both indoors and outside encourage children to choose and experiment for themselves. There is a wealth of opportunity for imaginative play in *home corners*, including going on a boat journey outside. Children have free access to musical instruments both inside and outdoors to accompany their play. They regularly take part in planned music-making sessions with adults, where they are encouraged to move to music. They listen and dance to Asian music and are building up a good repertoire of favourite songs and rhymes. They make their own instruments, using transparent containers and a variety of pulses, stones and pieces of wood. Stories are used well to promote children's creativity. For example, they examined the textured surfaces of exotic fruit featured in *Handa's Surprise* and talked about how each piece felt, tasted and smelled.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	8
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
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	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	8
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>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); not applicable to this school (8).*