

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HYLTON RED HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL**

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108748

Headteacher: Miss Diana Clark

Lead inspector: Mrs Paula Allison

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267092

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 - 4 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 56

School address: Rotherham Road  
Red House Estate  
Sunderland  
Tyne and Wear

Postcode: SR5 5QL

Telephone number: 0191 553 5405  
Fax number:

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of Mrs C Baggott  
governors:

Date of previous April 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is a nursery school, which currently has 56 three and four year old children on roll, although this will go up to 70 in January when more children are taken in. Children attend for half a day for between three and five terms, before transferring to primary school in the September of the year in which they are five. There are similar numbers of boys and girls and virtually all children are of white, British ethnic origin. There are no children for whom English is an additional language.

The school is on the edge of Sunderland, between a large council housing estate and a smaller estate of private housing, and is in an area of high levels of social deprivation and unemployment. Many children are from single parent families. Overall, the socio-economic circumstances of children are below average. Twenty-three per cent of children have already been identified as having special educational needs, mainly because of speech and language or moderate learning difficulties. Many children have weak skills in personal and social development, communication and language, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Overall, attainment on entry to the nursery is well below what might be expected for children of this age.

The school is in an Education Action Zone (EAZ) and is involved with other external agencies, such as 'Sure Start'. The school provides a range of additional childcare and family learning and support. During the time of the inspection the school was undergoing some major building work, which limited space and storage and staff facilities.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21420	Paula Allison	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
13723	Jean Overend	Lay inspector	
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good nursery** with a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Children thrive in its care and achieve very well. The school is very well led and managed and teaching is of a very good quality. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Although attainment overall is below average, during their time in the school children make considerable progress in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning;
- Adults in the nursery understand how children learn and provide varied and well planned activities, experiences and opportunities for them;
- The quality of the provision for children's personal development results in children becoming confident and independent learners;
- There is a very strong sense of team work in the school, which provides a secure environment for children;
- The school provides a high quality of care and support for all children and their parents and carers.

The school was last inspected in 1999 and had no significant weaknesses and no key issues. Nevertheless, since then improvement has been very good. This is a school that is constantly looking for ways to get better and there have been successful developments in areas such as teaching, organisation of the school day, curriculum and staffing. As a result, children make even more progress than they did. For example, recently there have been significant improvements in children's speaking skills. The outside area has been substantially and effectively improved and currently the accommodation is being developed to provide more space.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Achievement is very good.** When children enter the nursery many of them have limited skills. These are particularly low in personal, social and emotional development, language and communication and knowledge and understanding of the world. From this low baseline, all children make very good progress during their time in the nursery. In personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, creative and physical development most children are on course to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. This is a considerable achievement. In the important areas of language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world, although children make very good progress, many are not yet on course to achieve these goals, so attainment overall is below average. Despite this, children are all achieving very well. A quarter of children have been identified as having special educational needs and they make very good progress towards the goals set for them.

**Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and a



consistent approach to the development of positive attitudes. Relationships throughout the nursery are very good. Children respond well with very good behaviour and a keenness to learn. They gain confidence and independence and learn to get on with others. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good.** Teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and they are skilful in providing the experiences that enable them to learn. The quality of support staff and the way in which they are deployed is excellent. This is a major factor in the quality of learning going on in the school. Assessment systems are thorough and staff know children very well.

The curriculum is wide ranging and gives children many exciting opportunities to explore and experiment, to be independent, to pursue their own interests and to develop skills. Children are very well cared for and supported. The partnership with parents is very good. Of particular note is the quality of the external services, such as the Family Nurturing Project and the Parent and Toddler Group, which are expertly led, provide very well for children and their parents and carers and contribute substantially to children's achievement.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school. She has a clear vision, based securely on promoting children's learning. She has established a very strong team, where all adults know their roles and responsibilities and work together positively throughout the day. This is a key element to the effectiveness of the school. The school is very well managed. A high priority is placed on developing the skills of staff and deploying them to the best effect. The school is self-critical and is always willing to embrace change if it will help towards improvement. Funding and support from outside agencies are used very effectively in the interests of children. Governors have only very recently been given fully delegated responsibilities but are already well on the way to becoming an organised and committed team, ready to support the school and help shape its direction.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school, they feel particularly strongly about how happy their children are in school and the progress they make. They feel they can approach the school and are welcome there, 'staff are like friends'. The Parent and Toddler Group is highly valued. Children are happy in school and like all the activities that are provided for them.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no significant weaknesses and has identified appropriate priorities for further development.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall attainment is below what is expected of children of this age, but achievement is very good.

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

- Children achieve very well in all areas of learning;
- Most children are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and creative and physical development;
- Many are not on course to reach the goals in communication, language and literacy or in knowledge and understanding of the world;
- The school has been very successful in raising standards in speaking skills.

#### **Commentary**

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below what might be expected for children of this age. Many children have weak personal, social and emotional skills and find it difficult to get on with others or to control their own behaviour. Many have limited language skills, especially language for communication. They do not talk with any confidence, even in a small group, and their vocabulary is limited. Many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the world about them. A number are almost immediately identified as having some special difficulties, especially in speech and language and sometimes behaviour.
2. Evidence from a comparison between younger and older children, as well as the school's own assessment information, shows that, from this low baseline, children make very good progress in all areas of learning and they achieve very well. Parents are very happy with the progress their children make, 'He has come on in leaps and bounds' is typical of remarks made by parents.
3. Children make quite remarkable progress in the areas of personal, social and emotional development. From being diffident and lacking in confidence, they become self-assured and enthusiastic learners. They learn to behave sensibly and to take account of others in their daily lives. Most children are well on the way to reaching the goals expected by the end of reception.
4. Most children are also on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception in mathematical development, physical development and creative development. The quality of the activities and experiences provided for them in each of these areas ensures that they make very good progress and gain the skills, knowledge and understanding that they are expected to. They gain a very good understanding of mathematics through practical activities and experiences, they have lots of opportunities to be active and develop confidence in their physical skills

and they have many very good opportunities to explore, experiment and develop creatively.

5. Speaking skills have been a weakness and this was identified in the last inspection. However, through a focused effort on the part of the school, for example by the use of the Nurturing Programme which gives children on a regular basis the opportunity to develop communication and social skills, children are now making considerable progress in developing their powers of communication and expression. Results in this area last year were much improved. This is providing children with an excellent foundation for their future development in language and literacy. The weaker writing skills of boys have been identified by the school and strategies put in place to address this. Overall, despite the improvement in speaking skills, standards in communication, language and literacy are below what is expected. Many children are not on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception, particularly in writing and reading.
6. The school provides a wide range of well planned experiences to help children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, despite the very good progress made, many children are not on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception and standards here also are below what is expected.
7. Children with special educational needs are identified early, parents are involved and children are given very good support. They make very good progress towards their own targets. All children are treated as individuals and receive the experiences they need to help them make progress. Higher attaining children are challenged appropriately and given opportunities to succeed.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The consistency of provision to promote good attitudes, behaviour and relationships is very good, ensuring the children achieve very well;
- The Nurturing Programme is very effective;
- The attendance rate is good;
- Pupils' moral and social development is very actively promoted.

### **Commentary**

8. Parents value the nursery very highly and speak well of all staff. They know their children enjoy school because they are eager to come each day. The children rush in to join their key worker and group of friends at the start of the session. While some lack confidence to join in new activities immediately, they quickly respond to the many enjoyable experiences on offer and show pleasure as they act out role play scenarios, such as scattering dry leaves in the 'park' or acting as the police officer among the traffic in the outdoor play area.

9. Behaviour observed in all areas was very good, as the children respond really well to the adults' high expectations and provision. All adults maintain a very consistent approach with the children and establish very supportive relationships with them. The high ratio of staff to pupils ensures adults always have time for each child. This builds their self-confidence so they can try new experiences and can share and relate very well to others.
10. The provision for children's spiritual development is good. They have daily access to the wonders of nature, both in the classroom, such as their chance to study stick insects, and out of doors in their full use of the garden for growing giant sunflowers, strawberries and planting winter vegetables. They are also regularly helped to understand their own feelings and values, referring to good feelings as warm and fuzzy or bad feelings as cold and prickly.
11. Nurturing group time each day is a highly effective way for staff to help children learn to get on well with each other and to start to explore the need for a moral code or rules. The nurturing activities help to extend their circle of friends and encourage children to co-operate very well. The school also involves the children in charity initiatives, such as the Shoe Box appeal, so they learn about and can respond to the needs of others around the world.
12. Children's cultural awareness is raised through very good use of visits and visitors and involvement in projects such as 'Immerse in Verse'. This increases their enjoyment of learning about language, whilst appreciating traditional nursery rhymes. Children are taught about the diversity of cultures in British society through play resources and displays. Some important festivals of other religions are celebrated at appropriate times. The excellent teamwork between all members of staff constantly models the behaviour, relationships, consideration and tolerance of others for the children.
13. The school monitors attendance closely and rewards good attendance with a prize at the end of the year. The importance of good attendance is stressed to parents so that they set up good habits that will support the children's learning throughout their school career.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching and learning and the range and quality of the curriculum are both very good. Children are very well cared for and supported and the partnership with parents is very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is good.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The quality of teaching is often very good;

- Children learn effectively; they are purposefully occupied throughout the day with well planned activities;
- All adults make a valuable contribution to the learning of children.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	8	12	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 quality of teaching is very good overall. It is never less than good, is often very good and can be excellent. This is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection and it explains why children make so much progress during their time in school. Parents are very happy with the quality of teaching and care that their children receive.
15. One of the major strengths of the teaching is the way in which all adults work together. They have a common approach to such things as managing behaviour and this gives children a secure environment, where they know what is expected of them. Adults understand the needs of children and work hard all day long to ensure that these needs are met.
16. A lot of emphasis is placed on personal and social development and children soon become confident learners. This can be seen in the responsible way in which the older children behave and interact with each other. The common approach can be seen throughout the day. For example, an adult working with a group of children at a painting table emphasised the importance of sharing the colours they had. As a result, the children worked very happily with each other, many of them asking for and receiving the colours they needed.
17. The focus on children gaining confident speaking skills has been very successful but only because all staff work in the same way. The small group sessions are very effective, as children learn to communicate in these secure little gatherings and even the least confident begin to talk to others. Interactions throughout the day are positive learning experiences. Adults extend and support children's spontaneous play. For example, there are imaginative conversations between adults and children as they bathe baby dolls or act as park keepers.
18. Teachers plan carefully, using their clear understanding of how children learn to provide the experiences that they need. All activities have a purpose and everyone is aware of this; for example, in creative activities, where children are to be given the opportunity to explore and experiment, being encouraged and not hindered.
19. There is a very good balance between children having the opportunity to initiate activities and follow them through and adults supervising and dictating the way the activity should go. Children with special educational needs are very well supported. They have their own programmes and effective individual support.

20. Teachers have established some very effective systems of assessment. Adults gain information about children's progress in lots of different ways. For example, an adult is often present during small group sessions, recording children's language as they take part in an activity. Some very good records of children's achievements are kept and shared with parents. Data is used for analysis and future planning.
21. Staff know children as individuals. The key worker system is very effective, ensuring that each child is known very well by at least one adult, so children's needs are met individually. However, there are not enough links between information from assessment and actual planning and very occasionally opportunities to move children on are missed. Teachers are currently looking at ways in which to link assessment and planning more closely.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a very good curriculum for all children.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is enriched very well in order to extend children's experiences;
- It is planned very carefully and promotes exciting learning opportunities;
- Provision for children who have special educational needs is very good;
- The curriculum enables children to achieve very well.

### **Commentary**

22. There is a very good and carefully planned balance between activities led by teachers and those where children exercise their independence. The opportunities provided for children to experiment and discover through their senses means that they become independent and purposeful learners. The visually stimulating nursery environment is also rich in opportunities to develop physical skills both inside and outdoors. Children's personal development and the building of language and communication skills are the cornerstones of a curriculum through which all children thrive and achieve to the best of their abilities.
23. In order to broaden children's experiences and stimulate their interest and curiosity, teachers plan a wealth of opportunities beyond the school boundaries. Children visit working farms, parks and winter gardens, the seaside and take walks to places of interest in the locality. Visitors to the school include puppet theatres and a 'poetry puppy' (a golden retriever) to help children focus on language development. These activities have resulted in some children learning a good repertoire of nursery rhymes by heart, for which they received certificates.
24. Children who have more specific learning needs are supported very well. Their needs are identified early and parents are involved in discussion with the special educational needs co-ordinator about the best way to help their children achieve. Skilled teaching, sometimes on a one-to-one basis, which is supported by very thoughtful planning, ensures the children make very good step-by-step progress. Where necessary, more specialist help from outside agencies is sought.
25. The curriculum prepares children very well for transfer to their next school. A significant contribution to curriculum development has been the school's links with

the EAZ and other parent support groups. Parents are more aware about children's learning needs and provide an extra dimension to language development for example by the way they support their children at home.

26. Accommodation and resources overall are good. All staff, including nursery nurses and assistants, are well qualified and skilled Foundation Stage practitioners, who contribute equally to the corporate strength of the team. There is a good range of practical equipment to stimulate activities. The outside area is very well developed and provides a rich and valuable resource for learning. The school's plans to improve this facility are firmly underway. Inside space is satisfactory at best because of restrictions caused by current building work. When parent groups meet in the nursery, teachers sometimes struggle to find a corner where they can take a small group of children for a focused activity. More space will be available when the building work is completed.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good supervision and support are provided through the very high levels of skilled and trained adults;
- The provision of the Nurturing Programme and other family support initiatives is very effective;
- The key worker system helps staff know the children very well;
- Induction into the school is very good, supported by links with the Parent and Toddler Group;
- Relationships throughout the school are very good;
- Pupils' views are sought throughout the day.

### **Commentary**

27. The very high level of trained and skilled staff in the nursery ensures very good supervision of the children at all times. There are clear procedures to promote children's health and safety and risk assessments are undertaken to ensure safety when they go on visits off site. The headteacher has ensured all staff have had child protection training and, as the co-ordinator, keeps her training fully up-to-date. Staff are vigilant and know the correct procedures to follow.
28. The nursery provides children with very good support, advice and guidance in many ways. The key workers, having small groups of children in their care, can build a special relationship with each child so they get to know them really well. They can then ensure the teacher assessments are used to meet the needs of individual children and those children who need more support receive it. The Nurturing Programme and all the family initiatives add significantly to the level of support the



children receive and, by raising both children's and parents' self-esteem and confidence, raise the children's achievement.

29. Induction into the nursery is helped through the key workers being able to get to know their group of children quickly. However, the Toddler Group meets its aim to be a stepping-stone into the nursery by having an extensive transition programme to the nursery. This helps the children settle in very quickly and allows very good information to be passed up to the nursery about children's needs and abilities.
30. Pupils' views are gathered through their interaction with adults throughout their half day in nursery. The small group sessions are particularly valuable for them to express concerns and interests and their responses are carefully recorded.

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

Links with parents and the community are very good. The links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in very high regard;
- The school works very hard with parents to involve them in their children's learning;
- Very well managed community links impact very positively on learning;
- The Toddler Group and childcare provision strongly support parents and add significantly to children's achievement.

### **Commentary**

31. Parents are very positive about the school's provision and hold it and the staff in very high regard. A minority of parents would like to receive more information about their children's progress but communication between the school and parents is actually very effective. The headteacher and staff make themselves very accessible and parents are encouraged to come into the classroom at the beginning and ends of sessions so there can be daily transfer of information if necessary. End of term and year reports contain good information to help parents help their children with the next steps of learning.
32. The school provides a very helpful range of initiatives to help parents and other family members become more involved in the children's learning. These courses and the integrated childcare services are delivered to a very high standard. Parents themselves say how effective the 'Talk Talk' programme, where children take home packages of resources all linked to a particular topic, is in involving the whole family in helping the children. Parents who have attended the Nurturing Course are very enthusiastic about its impact, both on themselves and on their children, and their comments are carefully evaluated each week to see what can be improved. Adults on the Family Literacy Course are delighted with the way the teaching has helped them understand their children's learning better while being very enjoyable and beneficial to themselves. The nursery parents are loyal supporters of school events so helping to raise more funds for the nursery.

33. The school is outward looking and forms links with the community to offer more learning opportunities to the children. The links with 'Sure Start' and with the EAZ are amongst the most valuable in raising achievement. The provision of support workers, both for the Toddler Group and nursery, and provision of funding for resources to start the extra care services and the family initiatives, are all having a large impact on the provision for these children. All these initiatives and services are very well managed by the school, so that they integrate seamlessly with the nursery day to be most beneficial to the children.

34. The headteacher values the constructive relationships with other schools. Good links with the primary school on the same site allow the nursery children to transfer happily. The closeness of the Toddler Group and school link allows very good flow of information and for the children to settle into the nursery very quickly. Involvement in the mentoring of trainee teachers from the local college and other students is a very productive two-way link.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management overall are very good. Leadership is very good. The school is very well managed. Governance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides very effective leadership; she has a clear vision based on promoting children's learning;
- Teamwork within the school is excellent and is a key factor in promoting children's achievement;
- The school is very well managed on a day-to-day and long-term basis.

### **Commentary**

35. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. She has a clear vision based on promoting children's learning and ensures that this is carried through all that the school provides. Parents are very confident in the leadership. They particularly appreciate the warm and welcoming atmosphere, something that stems from the headteacher's approach. She has established a clear sense of team work within the school. The way in which everyone involved with the school works together positively with common goals is excellent. All adults know their roles and responsibilities and together they create a learning environment in which children feel secure and happy.
36. School development planning is very good. The school is self-critical and is always willing to make changes if they will bring about improvement. There is a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and a striving for improvement. For example, a weakness in speaking skills was identified and strategies put in place to address this. Improved results show how successful the school has been.
37. The management of the school is very good. It is efficient and effective but the school remains friendly and welcoming. The school clerk is efficient and personable. The warm approach she has towards staff, children, parents and visitors makes a big difference to how welcome people feel. There is a strong emphasis on caring for the individual and in promoting staff development. For example, students and others new to the school are expertly mentored. This is one of the reasons why all adults can be seen to be making a valuable contribution to the teaching and learning.
38. The school's finances are very well managed. The school has only recently been given a fully delegated budget but is already making efficient use of it. External funding and resources are sought out and used well in the interests of the children and to support the school's own priorities. The school gives very good value for

money in the quality of the education provided and the levels of support for families and the community.

39. Governors have only recently been given fully delegated responsibilities and some governors have only just been appointed. At the time of the last inspection, the school still shared a governing body with the primary school. However, they are already well on the way towards getting themselves organised into committees, so as to be able to play a more major role in shaping the future of the school. They are a loyal and committed group and between them they know a lot about the work of the school. The chair of governors in particular provides good support for the headteacher. Currently, governance is satisfactory but there is obvious potential for this to develop and improve, given time.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	158,967	Balance from previous year	8,839
Total expenditure	152,952	Balance carried forward to the next	14,854*
Expenditure per pupil	1,911		

*\* There was a large balance from the previous year, because of funding put aside for building work and outdoor development which is being spent currently.*

## **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**

- Children become confident and enthusiastic learners;
- Children learn to behave well and to respect others;
- Teaching is very good; teachers, nursery nurses and assistants are excellent role models.

##### **Commentary**

40. Children achieve very well in this area of learning because it is expected of them. All adults who work in the nursery understand the children and their specific needs. They provide excellent role models in the way they build relationships and work as a team. Consequently, children learn to work together and to share equipment. They confidently turn to adults when they need help. Although most children have spent a relatively short time in school, they have made rapid progress and are well in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception.
41. Children very quickly learn the daily classroom routines. They register their own attendance by collecting their name cards to hand to the teacher as they come through the cloakroom. When they arrive at the beginning of a session they are ready and willing to learn. Children are well able to select their own activities. They settle quickly to their chosen tasks and are beginning to sustain their concentration and involvement. Many are already developing very good relationships with other children in the way they share role play or work together as a group. A few children are slower to develop emotionally and need more support and encouragement to share activities with others. Children show good levels of self-control. They listen to others during group teaching sessions and take turns to speak without calling out. They understand what is right and wrong and think about how their actions might affect others. Most children are willing to take the initiative during activities and explore various ways in which equipment can be used.
42. Teaching is very good. It embraces all areas of learning because children are always reminded about their responsibilities. When necessary, adults intervene sensitively to make sure an apology is made, for example, or to remind children about how to look after things in the classroom. As a result, there is very good pace to children's development. Children have positive views of themselves and an increasing awareness and respect for differences in others.

#### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- From a low starting point, children make very good progress and achieve very well;
- There is a strong emphasis on speaking skills and these are developed extremely well.

## Commentary

43. Many children enter the nursery lacking confidence and with limited language skills. A number have difficulties with speech itself. Attainment overall on entry is well below what might be expected. During their time in the nursery, children make very good progress and some are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception. Although many are not on course to achieve the goals, especially in reading and writing, they all achieve very well and their confident speaking skills are a good foundation for their future learning.
44. When children enter the nursery language skills are often very weak. Many communicate with single words and some find it difficult to talk to others, even one to one. The school provides small group situations in which children can gain confidence and they are supported and encouraged in these sessions. Most make considerable gains in vocabulary and soon are able to take part in discussions, albeit in a very simple way. Adults help this process by providing good role models and using every opportunity to encourage conversation. Listening skills are also developed well and gradually the concentration span of children is extended. Some children show by their responses that they have listened carefully to others and understood. Most eventually can answer questions, although few can ask them. By the time children leave the nursery, standards in speaking and listening are in line with what is expected, which is a considerable achievement given the low starting point.
45. Children enjoy listening to stories and take a real interest in books that are read to them. Adults make the most of these situations, involving children in following a story, repeating words and helping them to listen for rhymes. Some children look at books independently and the school provides a wide range of good quality books for them. Most children are at the stage of understanding how books work but few recognise words and phonic knowledge is limited. By the time children leave the nursery, standards in reading are below what might be expected.
46. Writing skills are weak. Some children find the actual physical skill of writing very difficult and some, especially boys, are reluctant to be involved in the process at all. The school has recognised this and is currently trying out different strategies for encouraging more interest, for example writing lists in the role play area and recording 'incidents' outside. A mark-making area is always available for children to experiment and a writing table with an adult on hand is set up on a regular basis. Many children are confident enough to have a go at writing. They ascribe meaning to the marks they make and understand that writing can convey messages. A few are beginning to shape recognisable letters and to make an attempt at writing their name.
47. Teaching is very good. Opportunities to use language are carefully planned into all areas of learning and the adults are well prepared to encourage children to develop their language skills. There are many opportunities to share stories and books. There is early identification of and response to any difficulties individual children may have.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT



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

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are taught very well;
- Activities are planned to provide very good opportunities through which children explore mathematical ideas.

## Commentary

48. Early assessments when children start the nursery show that their knowledge and understanding of number and shape are well below expectations for their age. Due to teachers' very good planning and their knowledge of what individual children can do, they make very good progress. Most are already meeting expectations for their age in number and counting and are likely to attain at least average levels by the time they leave the school. Given their very low starting point this represents very good achievement.
49. All children show a very strong interest in number, games and puzzles. Most recognise numbers to five and some count to ten confidently, when pointing to the objects. Teachers work very hard to build up children's mathematical language to help them share their ideas. When playing in the sand for example, children were repeatedly questioned about whether the containers were 'big', 'small', 'full', 'empty', 'lighter' or 'heavier'. One child counted out the number of times a small bottle was emptied into a larger one - consolidating his counting skills. Children choose mathematics activities independently because they are interested and motivated by the group sessions. Children enjoy the challenges of completing puzzles to put numbers in the correct order or to match pictures and objects. By the time children leave the school, most are beginning to count reliably beyond ten. They can name common two-dimensional shapes, use 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers and have a secure understanding of appropriate mathematical language.
50. In addition to the very well focused sessions to develop number counting skills, teachers use many opportunities to develop mathematical ideas. During a story time, a nursery nurse very effectively reinforced positional language by using hand gestures to show how the bears could not go 'over' or 'under' or 'round' different obstacles. Then children joined in very enthusiastically, so the practical activity meant they used their senses very effectively to absorb a mathematical idea. Another example of very good mathematics teaching was when children had to position a straight guideline across the garden using sticks and a length of wool. The teacher introduced mathematical language such as 'The far side of the garden', 'Is the wool the right length?' and 'Make sure it is a straight line', before the children set about planting and counting spring bulbs.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good activities are planned which challenge and enrich children's learning;
- Teaching is very good.

## Commentary

51. Because children's ability to question and explain is very limited when they start nursery, their knowledge and understanding are well below average. Although still below what is expected when they leave, the opportunities provided for them to

develop their interest and curiosity through play, investigation and other first hand experiences mean that they make very good progress and achieve very well.

52. Children show interest in how things work and explore movement and sound. After a group music session, some children went straight to the display of instruments and continued the lesson themselves by experimenting with the different sounds they made. When playing at the sand and water trays or with construction sets, children learn how simple equipment works. One child, for example, explained why sand pours straight through a funnel. There are many opportunities for children to use simple tools for digging, sawing or moulding and shaping materials.
53. Teachers plan very good role play opportunities by which children learn to care for others and become aware of people who look after them. During the inspection, children were exploring the world of 'Percy the Park Keeper'. They dressed up, worked in 'the park' and learned about the habitats of many woodland animals. There was some very good learning when children marked out an area of the garden and dug a row of holes to plant bulbs. Earlier, groups of children harvested vegetables which they grew themselves and made vegetable broth. Some equally effective adult intervention was seen when children playing with dolls at the water tray were shown how to bath and care for a baby. They learned to be gentle and to hold the baby's head up and how to wrap the baby in a towel.
54. Technical skills are developed very well. Children approach the computers confidently and manage the mouse and simple keyboard skills well. They are also developing an interest in the new interactive whiteboard, where they draw pictures and print them out.
55. Children gain a sense of time and place very well because of the many enriching experiences provided. They go for walks in the locality of the school and visit local museums and parks. Their horizons are broadened by visits to farms, where they see how young animals are nurtured, and to the seaside and sea-life aquarium. Children talk about similarities and differences in what people do and where they live and begin to show some awareness of other cultures and important festivals.
56. Teaching is very good. Adults in the nursery are very good at seizing opportunities to link knowledge and understanding to the other areas of learning. Most significant is the way it is used to develop children's language skills. Teachers are very quick to use opportunities to question, teach relevant language and encourage children to talk and explain their ideas.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make very good progress and achieve very well;
- The outside area is very well used to provide children with lots of opportunities to develop their physical skills;

- Adults supervise very well, so children can safely take risks and make strides in their learning.

### **Commentary**

57. Many children enter the nursery lacking confidence and with limited physical skills. Attainment overall on entry is below what might be expected. During their time in the nursery, children make very good progress and most are well on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception. This is very good achievement.
58. Some are quite diffident at first but most children make very good progress and soon learn to move freely and with pleasure and confidence. For example, in a small group session children were invited to jump amongst dry leaves and then throw them up as if they were the wind. At first a few of the children were reluctant to do this but during the session confidence grew and by the end all except one were happily moving their bodies, some in time to the music.
59. Very good use is made of the outside area and on most days children have access to a range of equipment and are able to develop their skills. For example, they climb and balance on a climbing frame and ride wheeled vehicles. The levels of supervision are high, so children are kept safe and can take risks and try out their skills. For example, a girl struggled with determination to climb up the frame and the adult, although aware of her, deliberately did not help and she managed it all on her own. So pleased was she that she slid down and tried the climb again. Many children are beginning to move with control and an awareness of space and others. For example, they ride wheeled vehicles and change direction to avoid obstacles.
60. Fine motor skills are quite weak and many children struggle with using a pencil or brush. Teachers plan for children to have regular access to such equipment so they can be taught to use them and have plenty of opportunity to consolidate their learning. For example, a cutting table is always available and with regular practice most children gain confident cutting skills. Children are given the opportunity to learn how to safely use real tools, such as hammers and saws.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Children make very good progress and achieve very well;
- Children are given lots of opportunities to explore materials and to use their imagination;
- Adults support but never stifle the exploratory process.

### **Commentary**

61. Many children enter the nursery lacking confidence and with limited experiences in using materials. Attainment overall on entry is below what might be expected.

During their time in the nursery, children make very good progress and most are well on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception. This is very good achievement.

62. Children explore media and materials and they gain a lot of confidence in following their own interests and imagination. They explore colours and textures with paint and playdoh. Most are currently at the stage of making marks on paper and noticing what happens. Some can mix their own colours and are excited by the results. Most children are able to create their own collages with a range of materials and lots of glue.
63. Children are interested in songs, although many do not have the confidence to join in. They are interested in exploring the sounds made by musical instruments, seen, for example, when children tried to play a variety of instruments quietly and loudly. Children take part imaginatively in role play, for example when working as 'park keepers' and carrying out jobs in 'the park'.
64. Teaching is very good. Activities and experiences are very well planned. There are lots of opportunities for children to explore and experiment with media and materials. Good quality resources are used and this makes a difference to children's attitudes. For example, children were inspired by the shiny and sticky paint provided for use with rollers. One girl spent a long time enjoying the texture of the paint and exploring how it could cover her paper and how the colours mixed and changed.
65. Children are well supervised, but their creative urges are never stifled by adults showing them what to do. Adults interact very well with children and help them develop their imagination. For example, some very good quality interactions take place in the role play area.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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