

INSPECTION REPORT

Maxilla Nursery School

London

LEA area: Kensington and Chelsea

Unique reference number: 100475

Acting headteacher: Alex Walker

Lead inspector: Marianne Harris

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd September 2004

Inspection number: 267295

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 children:	3-5
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	51
School address:	4 Maxilla Walk Off Kingsdown Close London
Postcode:	W10 6NQ
Telephone number:	020 8960 3981
Fax number:	020 8960 4164
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Vicky Hutchin

Date of previous 5th July 1999 inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Maxilla is a small nursery school that is housed in a purpose-built building that also accommodates an Under 3's service. When children join the school they have skills and knowledge that are, overall, well below average and come from generally disadvantaged backgrounds. Almost half of the children are at an early stage of learning English and half are eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than is normally seen. They come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The proportion of children with special educational needs is low, although many are new and have yet to be assessed. The school received an Achievement Award in 2001. The school currently has an acting headteacher and is negotiating to become an Early Years Centre, after a period of uncertainty when there were proposals to close the school. This has now been resolved and the school will stay open to provide a service to the local community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23288	Marianne Harris	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Creative development
9271	Selwyn Ward	Lay inspector	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Special educational needs Personal, social and emotional development Mathematical development Physical development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Maxilla is a **very good** nursery where children make very good progress during the relatively short time they attend. Teaching and learning are very good because all of the staff understand the needs of young children very well. The nursery is very well led and managed, with all staff working really effectively as a team. Maxilla Nursery School provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- All children, whatever their ability, achieve very well overall, although they do not make as much progress in mathematical development as in all the other areas of learning.
- Children learning English as an additional language make very good progress.
- Teaching and learning are very good because work is very well matched to the interests and abilities of each child.
- Assessment is very thorough and is used extremely well to plan future activities.
- The very effective leadership of the acting headteacher, and the very supportive governing body, has resulted in very effective teamwork and very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Children are very positive about learning because the whole environment is exciting and stimulating and, consequently, they are very happy to come to school.
- The very good links that are made between each area of learning make lessons interesting and fun.
- There is a very effective partnership between the school and parents and this contributes to the very good progress that children make.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in 1999. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. The reorganisation of some parts of the day has resulted in the boys being more involved in the activities offered and the needs of all of the children being met. Children who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are supported very well and basic skills are taught very effectively to all children. The strengths that were identified previously have been maintained and improved upon, the most notable example of this being assessment.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's overall achievement is **very good**. When they come into the nursery they have skills and knowledge that are well below average, especially in their social, language and mathematical development. By the time they move to primary school the children have made very good progress. Most are able to do things that are expected of children when they are four years old in all areas of learning, except for language and mathematical development, where standards, overall, are generally below average. Children reach standards in their physical development that are above those that could be reasonably expected because of the importance that the school attaches to encouraging children to move freely and explore their environment using all of their bodies. Children who are learning English as an additional language, those who have special educational needs and those who are of higher ability are fully included in the activities offered in the nursery and achieve very well. Although children make good progress in their mathematical development, they do not achieve as well as they do in other areas of learning because some elements, number recognition for example, are not covered in sufficient depth.

Children's personal qualities are **very good**. The school makes very good provision for children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, and this means that children behave very well and are keen to take part in all of the activities offered. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. There are no attendance data for nursery schools, so comparisons cannot be made with other schools. However, children usually arrive at school on time and absences are usually due to illness.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** because all staff understand how young children learn effectively. Assessments are very thorough and used very effectively to plan future activities. The curriculum is very broad and is relevant to the needs of young children, with many interesting and fun activities that cover all areas of learning. There are a lot of visitors into school and staff arrange many visits into the local area. These enrich the curriculum significantly. Accommodation and resources are very good. The staff take good care of the children, helping them to settle quickly into the school routines and the partnerships that have been built with parents and the local community are very effective. The most notable partnership is with the Under 3's provision that shares the same site. This partnership means that parents can access the services the Under 3's centre provides, as well as resulting in children who transfer from this provision settling really quickly into nursery.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Despite the recent uncertainty over the future of the school, it is very well led and managed. The acting headteacher has a very strong commitment to the school and is providing clear leadership as the school negotiates the proposed changes. This strong leadership has resulted in a very effective staff team that provides a very good standard of education for the children. The governors are very supportive and have been at the forefront of preventing the closure of the school. They do a good job and have a shared commitment to the future of the school. However, they are new to the full responsibilities of a governing body and do not yet provide critical challenge to all staff.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are confident that the school is doing a very good job. Many have supported the school through the recent uncertainty, with many taking a lead role in fighting the closure. They are very satisfied with the education that their children are receiving and appreciate the other services that they can access through the Under 3's centre. Children are very happy to be in school. They settle quickly and make very good progress in their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve provision in mathematical development so that children can make the same progress as in other areas of learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in the areas of learning

All children achieve very well, whatever their ability. When they leave the nursery most children are likely to be on course to reach the expected goals for their learning by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, except in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Most are likely to exceed them in their physical development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are extremely well supported and therefore achieve very well.
- Standards in physical development are above those normally expected.
- Although children make good progress in their mathematical development, they do not achieve as well in this area of learning as they do in all of the others.

Commentary

1. When children join the nursery they have, overall, skills and knowledge that are well below those normally expected for children aged three. Many are not used to working with other children and about half are at an early stage of learning English. The children spend about three terms in the nursery before moving on to primary school, where they will complete the Foundation Stage. However, because staff are so knowledgeable about how young children learn and because the needs of all children are met, they all make very good progress overall and achieve very well. By the time they leave to go to various primary schools, they have skills and knowledge that are generally what is expected of children aged four. Children who are learning English as an additional language are particularly well supported because staff speak all of the community languages represented in the local area. This means that communication with parents and carers is very effective and the children can talk to an adult who understands their mother tongue. Children who have special educational needs are similarly very well supported and they make very good progress during their time in the nursery. Activities and tasks are well planned so that children of higher ability are challenged and achieve very well.
2. Children reach standards in their physical development that are above those normally seen. The school puts a lot of emphasis on outdoor physical play as many of the children do not have gardens at home. The very good resources that support physical play ensure that children are very interested in the well planned activities. There are many climbing frames, for example, presenting varying degrees of difficulty, which support the less confident children and provide challenge for those brave enough to have a try.
3. Although children make good progress in their mathematical development, they do not make as much progress in this area of learning as they do in all of the others. The staff have identified this as an area for development and have included this in the school development plan. Children are not given enough opportunities to write and recognise numbers, and some mathematical activities are not popular with the children. There are also too few opportunities for children to sing number rhymes and songs that would reinforce learning.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**. As a result, children behave very well, get on very well with each other and are very keen to learn.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy school.
- They get on well with each other and the adults in the school.
- The school provides very well for children's personal development.
- Positive encouragement leads to very good behaviour.

Commentary

4. From the start of their time at the school, children quickly learn to follow established, orderly routines. As a result, they are purposefully involved in the many activities on offer through the school day. Through increasingly interactive play with other children, they rapidly develop their social skills. Relationships are very good, with boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds all getting on very well and playing and working very well together. They all get on very well with their teachers and the other adults in the school.
5. As parents confirm, children enjoy school and they are keen to take part in activities. Although many of the younger children have quite short attention spans and tend to drift across to join in with interesting looking activities that are happening elsewhere in the classroom, they gradually develop increased concentration. Where children do wander over to other activities, they do not interrupt others and staff are adept at ensuring that they are involved. Even though children select for themselves and move between activities, there is no aimless ambling around the classroom.
6. Opportunities are taken to reflect and celebrate not only the many different cultures found in the school but others too, for example, through a recent visit from an Indian dance group. As a result, children learn to appreciate and respect others. Through their time in school, they develop growing confidence and self-esteem as they learn to think about their feelings. For example, a mirror on the wall invites them to look into it to see how they feel.
7. Behaviour is very good. Children follow the good examples set by the adults in the school and their good behaviour and increasing sense of right and wrong is encouraged through positive comments and positively worded rules. Rather than admonishing him for misbehaviour, a boy whose behaviour had lapsed was helped to understand that he had 'forgotten to be kind'.
8. There are no national comparisons for attendance rates in nursery schools, so inspectors are unable to make a formal judgement about attendance in relation to other schools. The school's systems for recording, monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Punctuality is satisfactory.
9. In their questionnaire responses, parents expressed strongly favourable views about the school's provision for children's personal development and about behaviour. This was evident during the inspection and children make very good progress towards the expected goals in their personal, social and emotional development. The school's

provision for children's development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their attitudes and behaviour, are better than reported in the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching, learning and assessment are very good and the curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of young children. The school provides good opportunities for children to experience a wide range of activities outside the normal school day. The children are well cared for and the very effective links with parents and carers mean that children settle happily into school routines.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is very thorough and used very effectively to plan future activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very knowledgeable about how young children learn.
- All children are included very well.
- Children learn to work independently.
- Assessment is very thorough and used extremely well to plan future activities.

Commentary

10. The table below shows the number of long sessions seen during the inspection and the grades given to each of these sessions. Teaching overall is very good. Each member of staff knows exactly what is needed to meet the needs of all children and ensures that all are included in the activities and tasks offered during the day.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 11 sessions

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7	4	0	0	0	0

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

11. Much emphasis is put on making sure that all children settle quickly into school and are happy. Staff know that until children feel safe and secure they cannot learn. At the time of the inspection many of the children were just settling in and all were very happy to be in nursery. There were no tears and staff made sure that there were many interesting and fun activities that would capture the imagination of the children. This resulted in children keen and eager to get into school and often reluctant to go home. Staff often follow the interests of the children rather than stick slavishly to their plans. This makes learning even more fun as staff dress up and act out roles that the children decide. This involves all children, especially those learning English as an additional language, as they can all join in the game, develop language skills and learn to play together. This often leads to children continuing their game after the adult has moved on and this is very good for their independence.
12. Activities are planned very effectively so that the needs of all children are met. Each evening, after school, staff meet to assess what the children have learnt and decide the activities for the next day, based on their evaluations. Several children are the focus for the week and comprehensive assessments are carried out on these children. Comments and photographs are added to their profiles so that parents can see exactly how well their child is doing and staff can easily identify children who are not making enough progress. Each child is assigned to a 'key worker' (a special adult who will get to know them well) and this adult develops a very trusting relationship with the child. This also helps the assessment process.
13. Children who are learning English as an additional language are very well supported in sessions. Activities are planned so that the adult who speaks the appropriate community language can work with the children so that they know what to do. Extra help is given to them so that they can develop their English language skills. They take trips out to learn

about the local area and to shop for the activities they are going to do. So, for example, children went shopping for a variety of fruit to cut up and taste. These activities are both enjoyable and interesting and help the children learn new words and vocabulary.

14. Children with special educational needs are similarly well supported and given the opportunity to join in games and activities that help them make very good progress in their learning. Adults throughout the nursery are well aware of the needs of each individual child and take time to get to know them and their interests.

The curriculum

The curriculum, enriched by a good variety of additional learning opportunities, and the accommodation and resources are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The organisation of the curriculum is imaginative and very well planned.
- The accommodation is very well used and provides a very attractive learning environment, with the covered outdoor area an invaluable additional resource.
- The children's learning is very effectively enhanced by a good range of educational visits and visitors.
- The provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
- Resources are very good and deployed in a way that stimulates children's imagination.

Commentary

15. As a result of a well-planned curriculum, children achieve very well. During the course of the day, the children experience a very wide range of stimulating and exciting activities across each of the areas of learning. A very good balance is achieved between those activities that the children choose themselves and those that are led by an adult. Two daily slots of 'key groups' work focus very well on developing the children's personal and social skills and language skills.
16. Children with special educational needs do well because they are very well supported throughout the day. Teachers work with them in small groups so they not only have individual help but also learn the social skill of taking turns. The school has good links with outside agencies who also support individual children. Similarly, children who are learning English as an additional language receive a curriculum that caters very well for their needs.
17. The accommodation is used very well to support the children's learning. The outside areas include a well established garden, raised play area and a large place for wheeled toys. The covered area with a sand pit and climbing frames means children can play outside even when it is wet. The very good resources are used in creative ways to support the activities planned, hold the children's interest and keep them involved for most of the time.
18. Visitors to school and visits out are planned to enhance the curriculum. Recent visitors include *Bollywood* dancers whose music and dancing captured the children's imagination. The theme of healthy eating included a visit to the market to buy fruit which was then used as a focus for discussion in most areas of learning such as the weekly story, naming the fruit, painting it, tasting it, weighing it and using it in the shop.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **good** care of the children. Monitoring of children's progress is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very effective monitoring and recording of every child's progress.
- Children are made to feel happy and safe.
- There are no systems to administer emergency medication.

Commentary

19. There has been good improvement in care and support since the last inspection. Very careful, detailed recording ensures that the school has very full records that chart each child's progress throughout their time in school. These records, which include photographs and teachers' notes, are used daily by staff to plan what children need to focus on in order to make the best progress. This record-keeping, and the very effective use to which it is put, is a notable strength of the school and contributes strongly to children's good achievement.
20. There are good arrangements in place to deal with any accidents or illness and to ensure children's welfare and safety. As a result, children feel happy and secure. There are very good arrangements to help them settle in when they start at the school. There are appropriate systems for dealing with child protection issues. The school responds sensitively to any health or dietary requirements that families have. School dinners, for example, avoid meats that are prohibited in faiths represented in the school and avoid foods, such as nuts, that are known to be allergenic. There are no children with serious allergies in the nursery, however, there are no systems in place to administer emergency medication should the need arise.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **very good** links with the community and the neighbouring nursery centre. Links with other schools are good. The school provides very good information to parents and works in close partnership with them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express exceptionally favourable views about the school.
- The information provided for parents keeps them very well informed and involved, and helps them to support their children's learning.
- Very good links with the neighbouring nursery centre make for an easy transition to nursery school.

Commentary

21. Half of the parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. All were in agreement with all of the questions raised. This represents an unusually high satisfaction rate that was confirmed by the parents attending the pre-inspection meeting. These impressive statistics reflect a parent body that is kept very well informed of the work of the school and the achievements of their children. Parents actively support the school and are helped to support their children's learning, for example through practising early reading skills with them.
22. Parents are welcomed into school and into the facilities which are effectively shared with the neighbouring nursery centre that caters for babies and children under the age of three. They benefit from a regular weekly newsletter that provides helpful information about school and, through reporting family news, helps to promote a sense of community among the families served by the school. Staff, between them, speak all of the home languages of the children currently attending the school. This helps to ensure that all families are fully included. The very good records that the school keeps of children's

progress and achievement are shared both with parents and the schools to which children transfer for their reception year. Similar records are kept in the nursery centre and these transfer with the children when they start in the school, so teachers are able to help children build on what they have achieved previously. However, because the children transfer to many different primary schools, there is no established system for children to visit their next school or for staff from these schools to visit the nursery.

23. The school has been very successful in building community partnerships. Many helpers come into school, including from local businesses in the area. Costumes from the Notting Hill Carnival have been donated to the school and children have been invited to take part in designing and making costumes for the 2005 Carnival. There has been good improvement in the school's partnerships with the community and with parents since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The school is very well managed and the acting headteacher and staff team provide very good leadership. Governors do a good job.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher provides enthusiastic leadership.
- Staff all work very effectively as a team.
- Work is very well planned to meet the needs of each child.
- Governors are very supportive of the school and have a shared commitment to its future development.
- The school has a useful improvement plan but its success criteria are not all sufficiently measurable.

Commentary

24. The school has had a series of temporary arrangements for its leadership following a period of uncertainty when there were local authority plans for its closure. Although a decision has now been taken to retain the school, some uncertainty continues because of plans, as yet not finalised, for turning the school and the neighbouring nursery centre into a unified Children's Centre. Governors have decided not to make a permanent headteacher appointment until this question is resolved but the current acting headteacher, who has been in post since April 2004, is continuing until a permanent appointment can be made.
25. In her short time in post, the acting headteacher has been very successful in building very effective working partnerships with parents and the staff team. Staff, parents and governors have been brought closer together through the battle to save the school from closure and, under the enthusiastic leadership of the acting headteacher, all share a vision for the school's future and its development at the heart of the multiracial community that it serves.
26. There are very good systems in place for keeping track of children's progress and using this information to plan what children need to learn in order to achieve their best. There has been good monitoring of teaching and learning, drawing effectively on support from the local education authority, that has helped staff to focus on further improving provision

for the children. Very good use has been made of training courses on offer to help staff to develop their expertise.

27. Governors are very supportive of and knowledgeable about the school. They do a good job and played a major role in leading the battle to prevent its closure. They are fully involved in the Children's Centre plans. Governance is good rather than very good, however, because there is little evidence of governors providing critical challenge to staff. Governors have, with input from all staff, agreed a new school improvement plan. This is comprehensive and provides a useful management tool, but some of the criteria for assessing success in achieving its targets are somewhat vague and unmeasurable.
28. Changes in the financial rules for nursery schools have meant the school taking on greater responsibility this year for managing its own finances. Day-to-day management of the finances is very efficient. The school has good awareness of the need to ensure *best value*. For example, parents have been consulted and their views on school priorities acted upon and reported back.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	209,870
Total expenditure	208,709
Expenditure per child	4,092

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	2,647
Balance carried forward to the next	3,808

Because of the nature of the school, the need for a high staff:child ratio and the changes in financial rules for nurseries, the expenditure per children is very high. This does not, however, detract from the very good value for money provided by the school because the complex needs of all of the children are fully met.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths

- Achievement is very good because very effective teaching ensures that children are encouraged to become confident and independent.
- Very good induction procedures mean children settle into school quickly and are happy
- The high expectations and very good role models set by all staff ensure that children have a positive approach to all activities and experiences.

Commentary

29. Although many of the children have poorly developed social skills when they start school, most attain the level expected for their age in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. Very good teaching ensures that children of all abilities achieve very well from their different starting points. There are many opportunities during the day for promoting the children's social skills, by introducing them to the social conventions associated with eating meals together, playing games and taking turns, and considering the feelings of others.
30. When the children start in the nursery, all staff set very high expectations and behaviour is very good. Independent learning skills are fostered as the children put away resources and choose equipment and activities. The older children know the routines of the day well and the new children are keen to follow their example. Teachers and nursery officers ensure that children settle quickly, feel safe and secure and are quite happy to leave their parents. They know the children well and respond to their individual needs.
31. Because of the very good quality of teaching, the activities in all areas of learning are stimulating and exciting and, as a result, hold the children's attention. Even the youngest children show very good levels of concentration and perseverance and spend a good amount of time on each activity before moving on to the next. Younger children are happy to work independently alongside others, while the children who have been in the nursery for two terms are beginning to organise themselves and play together. Numerous examples were seen during the inspection where children worked unsupervised for extended periods, behaving sensibly and sharing resources.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children are involved in conversations and this results in children who are learning English as an additional language being fully included.
- There are very many activities that promote children's early reading and writing skills.

- Very good role play opportunities help children to work together effectively and act out their experiences confidently.
- All children achieve very well.

Commentary

32. Teaching in this area of learning is very good and children learn to be confident speakers and attentive listeners. Much emphasis is put on developing vocabulary and on helping children to work together in their play. For example, in a very good session children were encouraged to act out the story 'Handa's Surprise' using puppets and props. This was very effective in helping them to explore new words, learn about different fruits and to try out the story for themselves. The children were very excited as they played various parts and were very keen to try the different fruits. This activity was well planned so that it linked with other areas of learning. As the children tasted the fruits they described how they tasted and learnt about 'sweet', 'sour' and 'bitter' tastes. Children who are at an early stage of learning English were encouraged, through gestures and facial expressions, to express their likes and dislikes of the fruit, whilst children of higher ability discussed the various tastes.
33. Early reading and writing skills are taught very well. There is a wide range of both story and information books freely available for the children. They learn to treat books in the right way and to begin to use the language that books use. In role-play they are encouraged to write and the very well resourced writing area invites children to write for many purposes. They fill in invitations, draw pictures of their experiences and begin to write their names.
34. Children really enjoy making up their own stories. The adults in the nursery are very good at adapting their plans to follow the interests of the children. One such example was in outdoor play where the children wanted to re-enact an accident and play the various roles of firemen and ambulance drivers. This game lasted for a long while, with the teacher taking a role and introducing difficult vocabulary such as 'stretcher' and 'blood pressure'. The children delighted in being able to rescue the victim and make him better again.
35. By the time they leave the nursery the children reach standards that could normally be expected for children aged four. This represents very good achievement for all children and very good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children do not achieve as well as in other areas of learning because there are too few opportunities to recognise and write numbers.
- There are many opportunities for children to solve problems through well chosen activities and they experience a wide range of mathematical vocabulary.
- Although higher-attaining children count well and reliably, many children have a poor understanding of number.

Commentary

36. Overall, the children's attainment is below that expected for their age. However, children of all abilities achieve well from a low starting point and make good progress in understanding and solving problems. For example, in their market stall activity they had to fit different sized fruits into bags. They tackled the problem of getting water from the water

tray into a bucket thoughtfully and with enthusiasm. Although some of the older children count up to ten objects accurately, many do not recognise the numeral or have the opportunity to write numbers in their play. They enjoy jigsaws but other number activities are less popular.

37. Teaching is good and staff are skilled in the way in which they use many opportunities for extending the children's mathematical knowledge and understanding. Throughout the day, the children have access to a wide variety of activities that promote their mathematical development. In free-choice activities, staff work alongside the children, developing their vocabulary as they make comparisons of size and weight. Children helped the nursery officer cut up fruit and, in talking about halves and quarters, were beginning to understand about fractions. However, there are not enough opportunities to reinforce mathematical understanding through songs and games.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside area is used very well so that children develop a very good understanding of the natural world.
- Information and communication technology skills are promoted well and children are confident using relevant programs.
- Children learn about the local area because trips are well planned.
- There are many opportunities for the children to find out how their bodies work.

Commentary

38. All elements of this area of learning are very well planned for. The outside area is used extremely well so that children begin to understand about growing plants and tending them while they flourish. There are many areas that children can explore and listen to the variety of sounds that are prevalent in the inner city. The road that goes right over the top of the nursery is used as a listening resource as children think about the traffic. Many ornaments adorn the trees and the children learn about the wind and the sun and the effect it has on the local area. One side of the nursery is completely shielded by the road and this means that it can be used even if it rains. Children know which side is to be used and discuss the things they can do in either side of the nursery.
39. Children learn to use computers confidently. They access relevant programs and concentrate for long periods of time. Their skills in building and designing are also developed well. Children delight in making models using the very good resources and then discussing what they have made.
40. All activities are very effectively linked to other areas of learning so that children stay interested and keen to learn. The stories that are read are developed effectively and children learn about the heat of African countries and the fruit that grows there. They go shopping in the local market and begin to understand about where food comes from. They learn that fruits have different tastes and smells and discuss this in small groups.

41. Teaching is very good and all children are supported very effectively so that they can make very good progress and achieve very well. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent and imaginative outdoor provision helps to develop very good standards in children's physical skills for climbing, jumping, riding and running.
- Exciting learning opportunities and very good use of resources are very effective in developing children's confidence and contribute significantly to their very good achievement.

Commentary

42. This area is very well planned, with both indoor and outdoor activities. In most of the indoor activities provided, children have the opportunity to develop precision and control as they work. For example, when pouring water into bottles, writing, making marks on paper or cutting and gluing, many show considerable control and accuracy, frequently better than would be expected for their ages. Opportunities for children to develop these skills are provided in all areas of learning and children are given many different resources with which to practise their skills. Outdoors, children demonstrate an ever-increasing ability to climb, crawl through apparatus, balance and run with confidence. They have a good awareness of space and rarely bump into others as they run. In response to a visiting dance company, staff encourage children to move in time to music, giving them musical instruments, scarves and streamers to wave that help them develop good control of their bodies.
43. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Staff encourage and support the younger children and the result of this is evident in the confidence and independence shown by the older children. Their energy, enthusiasm and participation is strongly supported by staff and lead to very good achievement by the children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many exciting opportunities for the children to make their own pictures.
- Children's overall musical development is very well promoted, although there are too few opportunities for the children to sing.
- Activities are very well linked to all other areas of learning.

Commentary

44. All children achieve very well in this area of learning because activities are very well planned and children, whatever their ability, are encouraged to join in. Painting activities are particularly popular and children freely draw and paint a variety of interesting pictures. One particularly popular activity was a large group painting that was set out as an early morning activity. Children were encouraged to paint on a communal picture, each adding their own brand of uniqueness. The finished article was colourful and each child had made a contribution.
45. Children's interest in music is very well promoted by the school. Although there are too few opportunities for the children to sing when in their small groups, there are many activities to promote dancing and playing instruments. The recent visit by *Bollywood* dancers really sparked the children's imagination. They were very keen to dance to the Indian music and dress up in the costumes. Planned activities include those that encourage the children to play a variety of musical instruments. Children learn to 'conduct' the music by using signs that say 'stop' and 'go' so that the instrumentalists know when to play.
46. Again, all activities are very well linked to all of the other areas of learning. The fruit that had been tasted was used as models for close observational drawings. The dressing up corner had Indian clothes and bells so that the children could practise what they had

learned and, when tasting fruit, they were encouraged to talk about what they could feel and smell, as well as what they could taste.

47. Teaching and learning in this area is very good and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
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
Overall standards achieved	2
Children's achievement	2
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	8
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well children learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for children	2
How well the school seeks and acts on children's 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
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the acting headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2

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