

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWTOWN NURSERY SCHOOL

Colne

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119090

Headteacher: Miss S Williams

Lead inspector: Mr J Hagan

Dates of inspection: 21st - 22nd February 2005

Inspection number: 267394

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: 83

School address: West Street
Colne
Lancashire

Postcode: BB8 0HW

Telephone number: 01282 864411

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Hartley (Vice Chair)

Date of previous inspection: January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized nursery school situated in Colne in Lancashire. The number on roll has decreased since the last inspection owing to more widespread nursery provision in the surrounding area. There are currently 83 pupils on roll who attend part-time either mornings or afternoons. Most of the pupils come from the local town and the vast majority are from families of white, British heritage; almost none are from ethnic minorities or homes where English is an additional language. Three pupils are identified as having special educational needs, but none has a statement. Whilst the full range of ability is represented, when most children start nursery their skills and knowledge in most areas of learning are typical for their age. Children can spend up to five terms in the nursery. There are 3 teachers, including the headteacher, 1 part-time teacher, 2 full-time NNEBs, 1 part-time NNEB and 1 part-time special support assistant.

Since the last inspection there have been some significant additions to its accommodation. The school now shares its site with a neighbourhood nursery and offers its parents and the community a wider range of services. In April 2004, the school started to manage its own budget.

The school has difficulty in recruiting governors and at present there are four vacancies on the governing body. In 2003, the school was awarded 'Investor In People' status and an 'Achievement Award' from the DfES.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|---|
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| 32657 | N Thompson | Lay inspector | |
| 2810 | C McBride | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage Special educational needs |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which lays firm foundations for children's future learning. Good teaching enables children to settle quickly after starting school and they achieve well. The headteacher and key staff give a clear lead for the work of the school and governors offer sound support. The nursery provides a very good environment of care and support for children and their families; it gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children make very good headway in developing their independence; their social skills also develop really well;
- The school offers strong encouragement and practical help for parents to become co-educators of their children;
- Children are very well cared for in school; parents and children place great trust and confidence in the staff;
- The headteacher and key staff make a valuable contribution to the community;
- Higher attaining children could achieve more in the mathematical area of learning.

The school has addressed the issues identified by the last inspection and its rate of improvement has been good. The weakness identified in pupils' personal development and independence is no longer evident; what was a weakness is now a significant strength. Additions to the nursery accommodation have increased facilities available to parents and means that the nursery can now add to the wider provision for the community.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement is good in most areas of learning, although higher attainers could achieve more in their mathematical development. The great majority of children are well on course to reach the goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage (when they leave reception). Their most marked achievement is in personal, social and emotional development, where many children are in line to exceed expectations; in this aspect, their independence is a very noticeable feature. Children are also developing computer skills at a faster rate than usually seen at this age and many are in line to exceed expected outcomes. Great enthusiasm and involvement in imaginative play is another strong feature of their achievement. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their difficulties. They build up their communication skills well and gain confidence in coping with social situations in the nursery.

Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Their behaviour is very good and they get on very well with each other. Older children show particularly good levels of perseverance and stay on task for prolonged periods of time. Attendance levels are satisfactory and the majority of children arrive on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the education provided by the nursery is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Expectations for children's achievement are high in most areas of learning, although teaching is not as strong in mathematical development. Adults are skilled at developing children's independence and allowing them to do things for themselves. Language development is promoted well and children with special needs, in particular, gain a great deal from this. The curriculum is of good quality. Teachers make good use of first-hand experiences to arouse children's curiosity and interest. Activities are carefully planned to help children make links in their learning so that important early skills are picked up as

quickly as possible. Support and guidance are very good; children form trusting relationships with adults; they feel secure and safe and they settle quickly when they start school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives a very good steer to the work of the school and she and key staff lead and manage the school's development well. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body is short-handed and inexperienced, but extremely supportive; they know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and, although new to the role, they are gaining confidence in handling their responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have an overwhelmingly positive view of the school and its efforts on their behalf. They have great confidence in the staff and in the leadership of the headteacher, and are particularly pleased with the way in which the school develops their children's independence. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk enthusiastically about what they do there.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise achievement for higher attaining pupils in the mathematical area of learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children of all abilities achieve well in the nursery and the great majority are on course to reach the goals for their age by the time they leave reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is most marked in personal, social and emotional development and many children are in line to exceed expectations;
- Children also achieve well in using computers and imaginative play;
- Higher attainers could achieve more in the mathematical area of learning.

Commentary

1. Much of the school's success in enabling good achievement for all is related to the quality of the curriculum it offers, its determined drive to ensure children's independence and the way in which it enlists parents as co-educators.
2. A strong feature of the nursery is the speed with which newcomers quickly settle and gain confidence. The growing independence of the children is a feature that parents value very highly and one that the nursery staff put at the forefront of their teaching. The school's high emphasis on fostering children's creativity is reflected in the wide range of opportunities for imaginative play and this leads to good achievement in the creative area of learning. Children's involvement and absorption in role play is striking.
3. Computer skills are developing at a faster rate than usually seen for children of this age and many are in line to exceed expected outcomes. The nursery staff set high expectations and work is challenging. Children quickly learn the correct vocabulary associated with computer technology and the school builds well on the skills they bring from home.
4. Good progress in early reading and writing skills is much enhanced by the partnership between school and home, as parents borrow books to share at home and use activity packs to develop their children's language skills.
5. There is a full spread of ability among the children who come to the nursery but the staff quickly get to know them and meet their needs well. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their difficulties. They gain confidence and understanding of how to adapt to the different social situation of the nursery. They form trusting relationships with adults and skilled, constant attention means that they build up their communication skills well.
6. Higher attainers fare well and for the most part they achieve as much as can be expected. The school's curriculum is designed so that, whilst they revisit activities, fresh challenges are introduced and many activities allow them to exercise increasing independence and choice. There is, however, scope for them to go further than they do in the mathematical area of learning. Teaching is not as strong here as in other aspects and work is not challenging enough in some aspects, such as calculations and shape, space and measure.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance levels and punctuality are both satisfactory; staff work hard to encourage a small number of families who seem reluctant to make use of the nursery. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children love coming to school;
- Children show care and respect for each other;
- Children's behaviour and attitudes both in and out of class are very good.

Commentary

7. Most children are regular attenders and arrive on time. They are happy to say goodbye to their parents and quickly select the activity or friends they want to be with for the first free session of every half day. Staff have tried a number of different ways to encourage the six or seven families whose children are not regular attenders. The school makes good use of its strong links with other agencies to obtain additional support to meet this need.
8. Children participate enthusiastically in school activities. Staff promote a very positive atmosphere through well planned activities. For example, many children were fascinated with the incubator; the anticipation and excitement after only two days of the eggs breaking and a new chick being born was contagious.
9. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good. They play well with each other, showing neither rivalry nor jealousy.
10. The school promotes good relationships with the local community and the children are involved in fund raising activities for both local and international charities. Recently, for example, they collected for the Asian Tsunami appeal.
11. The children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The school accurately reflects a well written and thoughtful ethos statement. The children show respect for each other and awareness of other children's needs.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Children experience a good range of interesting and stimulating activities. Teaching and learning are good. The school has a very effective partnership with parents. Care, guidance and support for pupils are very good.

Teaching and learning

Overall teaching is good; it is having a positive impact on children's achievement across all areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are skilled at developing children's independence;
- Expectations for children's achievement are high in most areas of learning;
- Challenge for higher attainers in the mathematical area of learning could be better.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 0 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

12. Staff are experienced and have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of children at this age. They share a common approach to teaching, in that they do not interfere with the flow of learning activities when it is not necessary. They allow children the opportunity to learn from their mistakes but, when it is appropriate, they will offer suggestions or lend a hand. This balance is always well judged and timely interventions are, therefore, a crucial contributor to the children's very good progress in gaining independence. In a baking activity, for example, an adult carefully supervised the process of making cakes, whilst it was the children who carried out the mixing and pouring. Adults are on hand during imaginative play and will engage in discussion with children about what they are doing; they offer prompts only to sustain the play or to help children take it further.
13. The nursery is a hive of activity; it runs smoothly and children quickly settle to its routines. This is the result of very effective teamwork between all the adults who work there and the careful thought that goes into planning activities. Everyone is familiar with the most important ideas that they want children to gain from an activity and therefore learning is purposeful. Staff make good use of resources to stimulate ideas or reinforce children's learning. A computer programme was used, for example, as part of imaginative play in the doctor's surgery; children were able to print out notes for patients and make prescription forms.
14. A strong feature of the teaching is the way in which all adults interact well with children and promote language development. Often, adults will take an opportunity to stretch children's thinking or to fire their imagination through good quality conversation. More likely than not, it is to encourage children to talk about themselves or what they are doing. All children benefit from this but those with special needs, in particular, gain a great deal from being encouraged to express themselves and communicate their ideas.
15. Children's progress is underpinned by the high quality of relationships between themselves and the adults who work in the nursery. Staff know the children and their families very well. They keep a close eye on children's progress and their assessments identify weaker areas of progress in their learning or development. This process is being continually updated; typically, the school has revised its approach because they found a more effective way of monitoring how well pupils were doing.
16. The school's assessments have shown that children's progress in the mathematical area of learning is not as strong as it is in others. More able children, it found, could do better in the mathematical area of learning; action is now underway to address the issue. Inspection findings show that teaching is not always successfully taking into account the differences in children's abilities. In some instances, all children will do the same activity irrespective of their ability and those who could progress further do not go far enough.
17. Parents and carers are highly valued by the school as co-educators. Children's learning is supported well at home by many parents who take advantage of the school's book lending service and activity play packs.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good. It is enriched by a good variety of additional learning opportunities. The accommodation and resources are good and are used well to support children's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning is enriched by a well planned range of first-hand experiences;
- Children who have special educational needs are supported very well;
- A good range of resources is used well to promote children's interest in learning.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of all children in the school. Stimulating activities, often linking the different areas of learning, help children to develop as curious and enthusiastic learners. The hospital role play seen during the inspection was a good example of how children's communication skills, creativity and knowledge and understanding of the world are developed through a single well planned activity.
19. The school's practice of leaving some activities in place for a long time, but adding more challenge over that period, means that children can return to an activity continuously to consolidate the skills already practised, while progressing to new challenges over time. The results of this can be seen in the increased levels of concentration and perseverance in the children as they develop positive attitudes to learning.
20. Children are given the tools for learning through a very good range of first-hand experiences. The local area, for example, is used effectively for visits to shops, the library and the police and fire stations. The staff take children further afield for such diverse experiences as a canal trip or a visit to a falconry centre. The contribution of visitors is used well to enrich children's learning; a dentist, musician and storyteller have all brought their own expertise into school to captivate the children's interest. Parents are very pleased with the range of experiences that the school offers, and delighted with their children's enthusiasm for what they have done in school.
21. Children who have additional learning needs are very well cared for and supported. Designated staff work closely with those children to ensure they are fully integrated into nursery activities. Staff are very sensitive to the different needs of the children and this helps them to achieve well in relation to their personal targets.
22. The school is well resourced and both indoor and outdoor equipment is used effectively to promote children's learning and development. The variety and good quality of resources is having a significant impact on children's learning, for example in the situations set up for imaginative play.

Care, guidance and support

Children are very well cared for, guided and supported.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction programme is highly valued by parents;
- Parents have overwhelmingly positive views of the school.

Commentary

23. The headteacher and all the staff work well together to ensure that the children are safe. Staff closely follow the agreed policies and guidelines for the care and guidance of the children; as a result, this is a very caring school. The accommodation is used very effectively considering the limitations of space. The physical safety of the children is given the highest priority and it is clearly taken into consideration at all times.
24. The headteacher is aware of any child who is experiencing problems outside school and works closely and effectively with other relevant agencies, particularly 'Sure Start', to ensure children's needs are met.
25. There is a very effective and popular induction programme. Two staff visit the homes of every new pupil and give comprehensive information about the school, including any support that is available to parents. Staff listen carefully to what parents have to tell them about their children, and one teacher subsequently remains the responsible adult for the child when he or she is admitted.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains very good links with parents. There are good links with the local community and good liaison with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 'Parents as Educators' course offers both very good support to the school and very valuable experience for parents;
- The school communicates very well with its parents;
- The school has developed good community links.

Commentary

26. One of the ways that the school seeks parents' views is through questionnaires at the beginning and end of every school year. The responses are overwhelmingly positive.
27. The headteacher has very successfully managed the development of the community nursery, which is now a valuable addition to the resource offered on the site. She has worked jointly with the manager of the local 'Sure Start' programme to put together a successful bid for the development of a children's centre in the town. The school are taking the lead for the educational element of the new centre.
28. The school works well with parents to support their needs by providing training and support groups, such as behaviour management, breast feeding and baby massage. The 'Parents as Educators' course that is put on each year in the spring term with other parent courses, such as family, numeracy in other terms, not only shows parents what the nursery teaches the children, it also allows parents to participate directly in school activities. It is particularly valuable in enhancing parents' confidence. The feedback sheets from the course are overwhelmingly positive.
29. Children move on to as many as thirteen different primary schools throughout the area. A teacher attends with each child the induction session for every school. This indicates the importance that the school gives to the transfer process.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher gives a strong lead in the clear vision and sense of purpose that underpins the work of the school;
- Teamwork and relationships within the school community are of high quality;
- Governors do not fulfil their role as critical friends successfully;
- Action plans for improving children's progress in the mathematical area of learning are not as robust as they need to be.

Commentary

30. The headteacher's leadership and management are good. She has established a hard working, committed and loyal staff. The impact of this is seen in the way they operate as an effective team. She has gained the confidence of the parents and they feel that the school is well led and managed. Leadership and management by other key staff are good. They lead by example and provide good support and guidance for staff.
31. The school's mission and aims are clearly evident in the daily life of the nursery. The headteacher has led the school successfully through a difficult period. The building of the neighbourhood nursery on the same site was managed successfully. Not only was the disruption to children's learning kept to a minimum, but the opportunities it presented to give the children a range of first-hand experiences that helped to support their learning were used effectively.
32. Good use has been made of additional funds, for example to improve further the school's partnership with its parents. Following a successful bid to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the monies allocated were used to develop the home/school activity packs and to meet part of the costs of the highly successful 'Parents as Educators' courses. Parents have benefited significantly from these initiatives and, as a result, they feel that they can better support their children's learning.
33. The school has recently been given responsibility for managing its own finances. Spending is linked clearly to the school's priorities and the impact of financial decisions is measured in terms of the effect spending has on the quality of the school's work and children's learning. The funding to improve the quality of the resources to support the creative area of learning has been used well. As a result, the children are experiencing a wide range of interesting and exciting opportunities.
34. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have been successfully addressed. The school systems for assessing and analysing information have improved and are now good. Through these processes the school identified a weakness in children's progress in the mathematical area of learning. Whilst an action plan to improve achievement has been implemented it is not fully rectifying the problems and the headteacher and her staff need to reconsider their approaches.
35. Good use has been made of the systems for managing and assessing the performance of staff to improve teachers' knowledge and skills. Following an analysis of teaching and learning, a weakness was identified in one aspect of children's creative development. Staff confidence in the area was not particularly high and so a programme to bring about improvement was established. This has had a beneficial effect and the teaching and learning in this area is now consistently good.

36. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Whilst the governors are enthusiastic and committed they are held back because of the difficulties they face in recruiting and retaining members. The workload and expectations for governors have increased significantly since the school took responsibility for its own finances. This has placed additional responsibilities on individuals who already have a substantial role. Some governors are newly appointed and relatively inexperienced, and there are still a few vacancies to fill. Currently, the majority of governors are drawn from adults who work in the school. This makes it difficult for them to fulfil their role as 'critical friend'.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 29,292 | Balance from previous year | 13,757 |
| Total expenditure | 8,033 | Balance carried forward to the next | 21,259 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 4,137 | | |

37. The large balance carried forward was put aside to meet the costs of the outdoor development.

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

- Teaching in this area is particularly good;
- Children settle very quickly and are confident in the nursery environment;
- Role play is used very effectively to develop children's social skills.

Commentary

38. All of the children are on course to meet the expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage and a good proportion are likely to exceed them. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the school's approach to this area of learning. It is now a strength of the school's provision.
39. The quality of teaching is very good and this enables children to make really good progress during their time in the nursery. There is a wide range of interesting, creative activities that contribute effectively to their personal development. When they are in the 'hospital' role play area, for example, children are beginning to develop care and concern for one another, as they act as nurses and doctors to look after the patients.
40. Activities are planned very effectively to ensure that children have ample opportunities to develop their independence and social skills. During snack time, adults sit with their groups and engage them in conversation, as they share the food and drink. This helps the children to see the importance of listening to one another and responding to questions when asked.
41. A strong emphasis is given to developing children's independence and, as a result, they make significant gains in this aspect of their development. They choose the activities they want to do, and access the resources they need without help and with little fuss or bother. They persevere with their chosen tasks for prolonged periods of time and are happy to tidy away the equipment they have used at the end of a session.
42. Relationships between the adults and children are very good. This enables children to become confident, secure and happy in the nursery environment. They enjoy coming to the nursery and even the youngest children are remarkably well settled, confident and feel secure. Some of the older children are already developing friendships and they act as good role models for the younger ones, who take the lead from them and follow their example. The staff take every opportunity to praise and encourage the children and this is helping them to develop positive views of themselves.
43. Staff know the children really well. They act as very good role models for the children in the way they work together as an effective team. Children follow their lead and are happy to work and play alongside each other. Most are willing to take turns and happily share resources with one another.
44. The staff are very successful in developing children as independent learners. They have high expectations for children in this area of learning. Children respond well to the daily routines, including self-registration on arrival each day. They understand that they have to

try to put on their aprons before starting 'messy' activities and their hats and coats before going outdoors.

45. Parents are exceptionally happy with the school's approach in this area of learning and feel that their children are making significant gains in all aspects of their personal and social development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school successfully enlists the help of parents in the development of these skills;
- Children make good progress in communicating and in the early stages of reading and writing.

Commentary

46. Effective leadership and good teaching in this area ensure that children achieve well and most are in line to reach the expected goals for their age. Although the majority start nursery with reasonably fluent speech and communication skills, a significant minority have difficulty in making themselves understood. The continual flow of conversation between adults and children accounts for the good pace of development in their ability, as children are strongly encouraged to talk about themselves or what they are doing. In each activity, adults consistently introduce correct vocabulary and reinforce key words. When working with children on the computer, for example, they use correct language by naming equipment and giving instructions using technical terms. Children with special needs are gaining confidence in speaking and expressing their ideas because they receive good levels of individual attention.
47. Books are used as a natural part of everyday play as adults take opportunities to introduce stories when appropriate. Two boys playing with a toy ambulance, for example, talked about what they were doing; an adult introduced a picture book about the ambulance service to reinforce their talk and further stimulate play. Children soon begin to listen to stories with enjoyment and concentration, because stories are carefully chosen to appeal to their interests or experience. The older or more able children voluntarily pick up books and look at pictures or repeat familiar phrases from the stories. The school has gone out of its way to enlist the help of parents in developing children's early reading skills, through well developed services for lending books and language activity packs. Given the very effective leadership and management of this aspect, it is not surprising that children are making good progress in early reading skills.
48. All children make good progress in starting to use writing as a means of recording and communicating; the school provides a very good range of opportunities for them to express themselves in this way. Most role play situations are set up so that children are able to practise writing. In the doctors' surgery, for example, they make appointments or record notes about patients. At other times, adults help them to record what they have seen or done, for example after they collected litter from the school grounds as part of an environmental project. Higher attainers are well on along the 'stepping stones' towards the expected goals for their age. Some write their own names independently and form recognisable letters by the time they leave.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher attainers could make better progress;
- Most children do well in recognising numbers and developing their counting skills.

Commentary

49. Most of the children are in line to reach the expected goals for their age. However, whilst most of them achieve well, some of the older children and higher attainers could achieve more. Overall, children are doing better in recognising numbers and counting than they are in identifying shapes, measuring and solving problems.
50. Overall, the quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Whilst there is some good teaching, too much of it is ordinary and does not challenge some of the higher attainers sufficiently. Too often, work covered by the groups is the same; whilst it meets the needs of most children it is too easy for some and, as a result, they mark time rather than making further gains in their learning.
51. The school has identified this issue from its own analysis of children's assessments and records. When they found that progress in this area of learning was not as good as it was in the other areas, they devised an action plan to bring about improvements. Whilst there is evidence that some of this is paying dividends, there are still weaknesses that need to be given more attention. For example, during the inspection all the children completed the same activity of estimating which clothes from the washing basket would fit the doll, themselves or their teacher. The higher attainers found this easy and were already able to use the correct mathematical vocabulary, when describing the different sizes of clothing.
52. The headteacher is now taking small groups of higher attainers and these sessions are proving beneficial, because the work is more challenging and children are making better progress. For example, in one session she asked the children to identify the numbers on two playing cards and then challenged them to work out the total. They enjoyed the activity and, by the end of the session, some were coping well with two numbers that added up to more than 10 but less than 20. However, these opportunities are only available once a week and for the other sessions these children work in larger groups on activities that are not as challenging.
53. During outdoor play, the environment is used reasonably well to promote mathematical learning but there is still scope for improvement. For example, activities such as estimating the distance the ball needs to travel to go through a hoop could be used more effectively.
54. Good use is made of rhymes and songs to develop children's counting skills. The classroom displays and other opportunities are taken to develop children's recognition of numbers, for instance by identifying those that are on their clothes. Children enjoy these sessions and join in enthusiastically with their teachers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good;
- Children's experiences are enriched by activities outside of school;
- Children achieve more than expected in the use of ICT.

Commentary

55. Children's knowledge and experiences of the world are typical for their age when they start nursery. The school builds well on this by providing a good range of interesting learning opportunities. Almost all children are likely to reach at least the goals expected of them at the end of the Foundation Stage.
56. Children are encouraged to explore the world through their senses and they develop good levels of curiosity about how things work. The school provides a good range of experiences in this aspect. They examine and observe things happening, such as the chickens' eggs in an incubator as they count down the days to hatching. Play with dough, sand and water teaches them about different textures. They sample different foods, as part of Chinese New Year celebrations, and taste a variety of fruits during snack time.
57. Teachers ensure that experiences also extend beyond the classroom. Good use is made of the locality around the school, which offers both rural and urban experiences. Walks to the shops allow children to observe some features of the town, whilst they see changes in the countryside, including newborn lambs, in the fields adjacent to the school. Visits to observe unusual activities, such as falconry or to absorb the excitement of pantomime, add richness to children's understanding of the world.
58. There are good opportunities for children to improve technical and construction skills. A good range of equipment, which allows children to build with large blocks of wood or fit smaller construction pieces together, provides a source of keen interest. Children are given time to experiment and test their investigations. For example, a train made from large cardboard boxes provided an ideal starting point for imaginative play.
59. Computers are a prominent feature in the nursery. Children are confident and willing to work at these independently. Programs are thoughtfully selected to link with current themes for learning. In one corner, for example, children keyed in 'prescriptions' for medical equipment. They printed them out, then went to find the items in the role play area. All children manage simple programs with ease and save and print their work. Mouse control is good, enabling them to move and control images on screen.
60. Children gain a sense of the past by talking about how things used to be and looking at old toys and other artefacts. They soon gain a good awareness of cultural practices as they learn about Christian and non-Christian celebrations.
61. Teaching quality in this area of learning is good and it has a good impact on children's learning and achievement. Teachers interact skilfully with children to encourage their independence and thinking. For example, when a child needed a battery for a toy ambulance, the teacher expected the child to find the battery and unscrew the casing to find out how it should work. Even though the right sized battery was not available, the child was obviously pleased with himself because he had found this out for himself.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for children to select and use a wide range of tools and equipment;
- The outside area is well resourced;
- Teaching is good.

Commentary

62. When children first start the nursery they have the expected levels of control over their movements. They make good progress and achieve well because of the good opportunities provided. Most are on course to achieve the learning goals of the Foundation Stage.
63. Teachers make sure that there are many opportunities for children to develop their skills. Tools and small equipment are readily available and children are expected to select the things they need. Teachers are watchful to ensure things such as scissors are used safely. Children are shown how to hold pencils correctly; as a result, early writing is controlled and children make marks confidently. They apply adhesives carefully and show good skills and confidence when joining different materials. The many chances they have to play with small world toys and small construction sets and puzzles contribute well to the development of the children's manipulative skills. When playing outside children show increasing control over their movements and are aware of others playing in the space around them. They practise moving in different ways, such as hopping, jumping and skipping, while playing ring games and show good balance and agility for their age.
64. Teachers seize opportunities well to engage children in physical activities. Despite the weather during the inspection, children were taken out to make footprints in the snow and to practise 'movements which warm you up' after the snow had melted. The teacher added extra challenge by asking children to decide which movements to do during the 'mulberry bush' ring activity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults are good at capitalising on opportunities to stimulate play;
- The nursery provides children with many good opportunities to capture their experiences in different ways and to use their imagination.

Commentary

65. This aspect is taught well and children make good progress towards the expected goals for their age. The leadership and management of this area of learning are good and particularly effective in developing the use of imaginative play. Children love the opportunities they have to imitate different roles relating to their work for each half term. For example, during the inspection the doctor's surgery proved to be very popular. Children's play was greatly enhanced by the high quality, colourful resources provided. Photographs taken at different

times of the year show children entering wholeheartedly into imaginative play in, for instance, a travel agent's shop, a garden centre and dentist's surgery. A role play area for a construction site office and builder's yard was set up; children were then able to capture the experience of the building work which took place last year to construct the new neighbourhood nursery. Children also use different props to support role play, such as large wooden blocks to create buildings.

66. Children make good progress in exploring colour and texture and in representing familiar objects; adults guide, but do not over-direct, their choices. For example, at the painting table they have a free hand to choose paper and paints and to experiment with colour mixing. Children with special needs gain confidence and make very good progress in identifying different colours; adults support them well and encourage them to try out different ideas.
67. Older children, in particular, show great perseverance at model making because adults work skilfully with them; they make appropriate interventions and suggestions, but do not take over activities. This enables children to gain confidence in joining materials and choosing and adding their own decorative effects.
68. Music and songs are a familiar sound in the nursery with newer, younger children soon learning to join in with actions. Older children sing songs from memory and thoroughly enjoy the chance to take part in dancing, ring games and music making. One boy spent a long time in the craft area, selecting and joining different materials including tubes to make a long drum, which he played with great pride and satisfaction.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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