

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTHFLEET NURSERY SCHOOL**

Northfleet, Gravesend

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118229

Acting Headteacher: Mrs M Silsby

Lead inspector: Mrs M Gough

Dates of inspection: 29th November – 1st December 2004

Inspection number: 267410

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 - 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	65
School address:	140, London Road Northfleet Gravesend Kent
Postcode:	DA11 9JS
Telephone number:	01474 533950
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sally Keep
Date of previous inspection:	July 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in Northfleet on the outskirts of Gravesend. It caters for sixty five nursery children between the ages of three and five, all of whom attend on a part-time basis. The children come from a very mixed range of backgrounds. Two-thirds of the children are of white ethnicity. Twenty children speak English as an additional language, seven of whom are at an early stage of learning English, and their main language is Panjabi. Four children are on the school's special educational needs register. The numbers on roll are falling, partly because parents choose to send their children to nursery placements that are attached to a primary school so that their children can have a seamless transition from one phase of their education to the next. The children's attainment when they join the nursery is below the nationally expected level overall. The school has just received the Kent Kite Mark.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22361	Mrs M Gough	Lead inspector	English as an additional language. Special educational needs. Communication, language and literacy. Personal, social and emotional development and creative development.
1165	Mr P Dannheisser	Lay inspector	
12997	Mrs C Cheong	Team inspector	Mathematical development. Knowledge and understanding of the world. Physical development.

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

This is an effective school that provides a **good** quality of education for all children. Overall, the children's achievement is good, and their attainment when they leave school is at the level expected for their age across most areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development, their attainment is above the expected level. Teaching and learning are good, and the needs of children with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well met. The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money.

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

- Children achieve well overall, and very well in terms of their personal, social and emotional development.
- The children's attainment is above the level expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, and the High Scope Approach is effectively implemented.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on the children amending their planning in the light of the ongoing changes they make during free-choice sessions.
- Although assessment systems provide very good information about individual children, not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.
- The school provides very good levels of care, support and guidance for all children.
- The provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good, and enables them to make similar progress to their classmates.
- Links with parents are very good, and there are exceptionally high levels of parental satisfaction.
- The school is well led and managed, and the governing body is very effective.
- The outside play areas do not provide sufficiently stimulating and challenging learning environments for the children.

There has been good improvement overall since the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning have improved and the school has developed the curriculum well. All of the issues identified in the last report have been fully addressed.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

Children of all ages and abilities achieve **well**, and by the time they leave school at the age of four, their attainment is at the expected level in almost all areas of learning.

When the children join the nursery, their attainment is varied, and taken overall, is lower than expected, especially in communication, language and literacy, where a high percentage of children have English as an additional language. The children achieve well in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In physical development, their achievement is satisfactory, and in personal, social and emotional development, their achievement is very good. By the time children leave school at the age of four, their attainment is at the expected level for their age across all areas of learning, with the exception of personal, social and emotional development where their attainment is above the expected level. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and progress at a similar rate to their classmates.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Their cultural awareness is very good. The children have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory. The school has very good systems for ensuring that children attend on a regular basis, and absences are almost always because of illness.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides children with a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is good overall. The assessment of the progress and attainment of individual children is very good, but not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities. As a result, although activities are generally suitable, they do not always closely match the needs of different groups of children. The curriculum is good overall, and the 'High Scope' Approach is effective in promoting the children's independent learning skills. There is a good balance of activities the children choose themselves and those that are led by an adult. However, not enough emphasis is placed on the children amending their planning in the light of the choices they make during 'free-choice' activities. The provision for children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. The school provides a satisfactory range of enrichment activities. The accommodation is satisfactory, although even more could be done to make the outside play areas more stimulating and challenging. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, although there are too few computers and listening centres, limiting the children's use and awareness of information and communication technology. The school provides very good levels of care, support and guidance, and the well-being and happiness of children are the shared concern of staff, parents and the governing body. The school's partnership with parents is very good, and there are exceptionally high levels of parental satisfaction. Links with other schools and the community are satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management are **good** overall. The caretaking headteacher has provided good interim leadership for the school in the period between the promotion of the last headteacher and the appointment of the new headteacher, and has been well supported by a knowledgeable, and well informed governing body, and an enthusiastic and loyal staff. The governing body very effectively fulfils its leadership role, and governors are regular visitors to the school. The shared leadership and management of the curriculum by the teaching staff are good.

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

Parents are exceptionally pleased with the school, and very much appreciate the efforts the staff go to to ensure that the children are happy and secure in their learning. Although the children have difficulty in expressing their views about school because of their age, they are happy and confident learners, and the vast majority separate very willingly from their carers at the start of sessions.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop the outside play areas so that they provide more stimulating and challenging learning environments. \*
- Make better use of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.
- Ensure that children amend their initial plans if they change the activities they have planned to do during free-choice sessions.

\* The school has already identified this as an area for development within its current School Improvement Plan.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The children achieve **well** overall, and attain the **expected** level for their age.

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

- Children of all abilities achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development, and their attainment in this area of learning is above the expected level.
- Their achievement overall is good.
- Good support for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language enables them to achieve well and to make similar progress to their classmates.

#### **Commentary**

1. The children are admitted to the school when they are three. Some stay for two years, but most stay for three or four terms, then transfer to nearby primary schools to continue their education. The nursery provision is offered on a part-time basis. The children's attainment when they start school is very mixed, with some higher-attaining children but also with a number of children whose attainment is well below the expected level for their age. Taken overall, the children's attainment is below the nationally expected level when they start school.
2. As they move through the nursery, the children achieve well and make especially good progress in personal, social and emotional development, which is an ongoing priority, and which is very well promoted. Children with English as an additional language achieve well, and benefit from good additional part-time support from a bilingual assistant. Children with English as an additional language quickly pick up enough vocabulary to enable them to communicate their ideas clearly and to take part in group activities. Children with special educational needs receive good levels of support and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
3. The children's attainment by the time they leave school at the age of four is at the expected level in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, and above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development. The children's skills, knowledge and understanding are effectively developed through a range of 'free-choice' structured play activities and activities that are led by an adult.

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

The children's behaviour is **good** and they have **very positive** attitudes to school. Given the age of the children, attendance is **satisfactory**.

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

- Children of all ages and abilities have very positive attitudes to nursery, and most are very keen to come to school.

- The children settle in very quickly and happily take part in the well-structured routines.
- The children show very good levels of independence in their learning.
- The children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and their cultural development is very good.
- The school has put a great deal of work into improving the children’s overall rate of attendance, and procedures for monitoring absence are very good.

**Commentary**

4. As at the time of the last inspection, the children have very good attitudes to school and the vast majority are very keen to attend. The children settle very quickly into the routines of the school, and are keen and enthusiastic in their work and play. They show very good levels of independence as they go about their daily tasks. They willingly take on responsibilities within the classroom, such as tidying away after activities, and confidently make informed choices and decisions about their work.
5. Behaviour is good overall, and the school sets very clear parameters for the children to guide their behaviour and relationships with others. There have been no exclusions. The few children who still have difficulty in managing their behaviour are dealt with very firmly but pleasantly, and the impact of their misbehaviour is carefully explained so that they gain an understanding of how their actions affect the well-being and happiness of others. The children are very well managed, and there are good opportunities for them to interact with others and to learn skills of sharing and taking turns. Parents are very pleased with the standard of behaviour in the nursery.
6. The school makes good provision for the children’s social, moral and spiritual development and very good provision for their cultural development. There has been good improvement in this aspect of the school’s work since the last inspection. Throughout the day, the children’s’ social and moral development is effectively fostered as the children work with one another and relate to the adults with whom they come into daily contact. The children have a good awareness of the simple rules of the nursery and a growing understanding of right and wrong. Teachers provide good opportunities for the children to reflect on their feelings and emotions, and encourage them to try to express how they feel through discussion, paintings and drawings. Teachers draw very well on the different experiences and backgrounds of the children who attend nursery. The children celebrate important festivals of different faiths and have experience of handling a very good multi-ethnic range of resources.
7. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in developing its systems for monitoring absence and for promoting good levels of attendance. Given that the children are below statutory school age, their attendance is satisfactory. Most absence is due to illness.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	14.1	School data:	2.3

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education for all children. Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment overall is **good**. Although the assessment of individual children is very good, not enough use is made of whole-group assessment information when planning activities that are adult-led. The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall, but the children do not always make enough links between the activities they plan to do and those they actually undertake. **Satisfactory** use is made of visiting speakers and visits to enrich the children's learning. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall. The school provides **very good** levels of support, care and guidance. Links with parent are **very good**, and links with other schools and the community are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment overall is **good**. Although the assessment of individual children is very good, not enough use is made of whole-group assessment information when planning activities that are adult-led.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of 'Small Group' activities is often very good.
- Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide a stimulating range of activities for the children.
- Children with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported so that they can achieve their individual targets.
- Assessment systems are very comprehensive, and provide very good levels of information about individual children.
- Not enough use is made of the outcomes of assessment when planning 'Small Group' activities.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on ensuring that the children amend their initial plans during the free-choice activity sessions.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	5	11	4			

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

8. The children are taught by a dedicated team of practitioners. The two teachers are very well supported by two teaching assistants and a nursery nurse. The nursery nurse and the teaching staff each have responsibility for a small 'key' group of children. The staff work very well together and share planning so that each member of staff knows the focus and purpose of each of the daily 'Small Group' sessions. The very good team spirit amongst the adults ensures that the children are working in a very happy and positive learning environment.
9. The direct teaching of 'Small Group' times is often of very good quality. Teachers and teaching assistants prepare these sessions well and link them closely to the curriculum for this age group. The clear teaching of key skills, such as cutting, sticking, and observing, has a positive impact on the children's learning. Adults make very good use

of resources to enliven their teaching, and to make learning more interesting for the children. However, not enough use is made of the wide range of assessment information that is collected for each child, and as a result, 'Small Group' activities are not always sufficiently closely matched to the needs of particular ability or age groups and do not always target the areas where the children need more experience or practice.

10. For much of the time, the children are engaged in activities they have chosen themselves. All of the children make initial 'plans' either verbally or pictorially, to show what they intend to select during 'free-choice' time, and adults use a good range of prompts, such as photographs and pictures, to remind the children of the range of activities that are on offer. However, although teachers review how the children have spent their time at the end of the 'free-choice' period, they are not sufficiently insistent that, as the children change their minds about what they intend to do, they return to their plans to make the necessary amendments. As a result, there are many occasions when the activities the children undertake do not reflect the plans they have made, and the children do not make enough connections between what they intend to do and what they actually do.
11. During 'free-choice' time, teachers and teaching assistants make good ongoing observations of the children, and engage in discussion with the children about their work, extending their language well and constantly promoting their personal and social skills. Practitioners are very effective in the way in which they encourage the children to make choices and decisions about their work and to develop skills of independence. All adults work closely with children with English as an additional language and special educational needs to ensure that they are able to take a full and active part in all activities.
12. Teachers make very good and comprehensive assessments about individual children. Regular observations build into very detailed profiles showing the skills the children have mastered and those areas that are the current main focus of their learning.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **good** overall. It is enriched by a **satisfactory** range of visits and visitors. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The 'High Scope' Approach is used well as a curriculum framework.
- The provision for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good.
- There is a good balance between activities that are directed by an adult and those that the children choose themselves.
- There are not enough computers or listening centres.
- The accommodation is cluttered in parts, and more could be done to improve the outside play areas.
- The curriculum is effectively extended by the good use of 'play bags' to extend the children's learning.

### **Commentary**

13. The school provides a good, relevant and broad curriculum for children of all ages and abilities. Following the structure of 'High Scope', the children have daily opportunities

to plan and review activities that they choose themselves and to take part in some 'Small Group' sessions which are led by a teacher or teaching assistant, and which focus on the direct teaching of key skills. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and 'free-choice' activities, ensuring that the children have good opportunities to learn, practise, and apply newly learned skills. The provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good, and as a result, they are able to take a full part in all activities.

14. The school provides a satisfactory range of enrichment activities, but visits outside the immediate area are limited by the school's location on a main road, and the young age of the children. A small number of visitors come into school to extend the children's learning, such as parents who bring special foods to celebrate important events such as Divali. The school is effective in the way in which it extends the children's learning outside the school day through the 'play bags' which parents borrow from the school and which contain educational activities that can be enjoyed by all members of the family.
15. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. However, there is a lack of storage facilities in the school and this leads to some areas becoming cluttered. The school has already made plans to develop the outside play areas so that they are more challenging and stimulating for the children, and some good progress has been made in developing the bog garden. Given the popularity of the computers, there are too few for the number of children on roll. There are not enough listening centres, and as a result, there are too few opportunities for the children to share books together without an adult and too few opportunities for them to use information and communication technology.

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

The school provides **very good** levels of support, care and guidance. The welfare, health and safety of children are of high priority, and are the shared concern of staff and governors.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a strong ethos of care in the nursery, underpinned by very good relationships.
- The school has very good systems for ensuring the health and safety of the children and staff.
- Very good systems make the transition from home to nursery very successful.

### **Commentary**

16. There has been very good overall improvement since the time of the last inspection in terms of the way in which the school cares for, supports and guides the children. The governing body fulfils its monitoring role well, and regularly visits the nursery to ensure that agreed health and safety policies are fully reflected in practice. Risk assessments are undertaken on a regular basis.
17. Good child protection systems are in place and members of staff have been informed of these procedures. The school is very aware of the individual needs of children and does its utmost to meet them. Children with home languages other than English receive good levels of additional support to enable them to fully participate in all activities. The school is very proactive in identifying children with special educational needs so that no time is lost in providing the additional support they need.

18. The school's induction systems are very good, and parents and carers of children who are reluctant to stay by themselves are welcome to stay with their children. This additional support ensures that the children are happy and confident learners. Relationships between the children and staff are very good, and children confidently approach teachers and teaching assistants to share their news or to communicate any difficulties they may be experiencing. Assessment information is used very well to track and monitor the attainment of individual children and to ensure that the children make the progress of which they are capable.

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

The nursery has **very good** links with parents. There are exceptionally high levels of parental satisfaction. Links with the local community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are exceptionally pleased with the school.
- The 'play bags' provide a very good link between home and school.
- Parents receive good levels of information about school events and about their children's progress.
- The school does much to ensure that parents whose first language is not English receive good levels of information in their own language when possible.

### **Commentary**

19. There has been good improvement in this aspect of the school's work since the last inspection. Parents are exceptionally pleased with the education their children receive and with the approachability of the staff. They are very pleased with the regular information they receive and the regular reports of their children's progress. The school is keen to seek and act upon the views of parents, and parents feel that they are genuinely partners in their children's education. Parents can come into school at any time, and in addition, there are formal parents' meetings where the parents can meet their children's 'key' worker to discuss their progress. Parents receive good information about the curriculum, although this is an area the school would like to develop still further. Parents are very pleased with the 'play bags' which are taken home on a fortnightly basis, and which contain a wide range of activities that can be shared by the whole family. The bilingual assistant provides a very good link for parents whose first language is not English.
20. Overall, the school has satisfactory links with other schools in the area. However, the children transfer to many different primary schools at the end of their second year in nursery and it is not possible for the school to develop links with each one of these. The school welcomes students on work placement and from the local higher education college. The school's links with the local community are limited by the geographical location of the school but are satisfactory overall. The school makes satisfactory use of the local resources and welcomes volunteer helpers.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The caretaking headteacher has provided **good** interim leadership and management. The governing body is **very effective**. The shared management of the curriculum by the teaching staff is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The caretaking headteacher has provided a good steer to the school's work and has helped the staff and governing body to formulate a good interim School Improvement Plan.
- The staff effectively fulfil their collective role of monitoring and developing the curriculum.
- The governing body is very well informed, knowledgeable and supportive, and very effectively fulfils its duties.
- Good strategic planning ensures that the school's finances are used efficiently.
- The school is very inclusive and caters very well for a diverse mix of children.

## **Commentary**

21. The current headteacher is acting in a part-time caretaking capacity until the new headteacher takes up her appointment after the spring half-term holiday. She has provided good leadership for the school in the short time in which she has been acting in the role of headteacher, and has created a very good balance between continuing to maintain and ensure the good quality of education the school provides, and introducing necessary features of change and development, such as the new School Improvement Plan. The team spirit amongst staff is very good, and there is a natural purpose and direction to their work that reflect the good leadership and management of the previous headteacher.
22. The school has a very strong policy of inclusion, and children of all abilities and backgrounds are warmly welcomed and involved in the day-to-day activities. Good support for children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language ensures that these groups of children achieve well and progress at the same rate as their classmates. The school is exceptionally highly regarded by parents and the school has done much to ensure a warm and welcoming atmosphere, ensuring that children are happy to come to school.
23. The small teaching staff share collective responsibility for the development and monitoring of the curriculum, and they fulfil their roles well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses which has been further refined by the recent work the school has undertaken prior to being awarded the Kent Kite Mark. The roles of the nursery nurse and the teaching assistants are clearly defined, and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.
24. The governance of the school is very good. The governing body has been set up since the last inspection, and governors have taken part in a good range of training to ensure that they are clear about their individual and collective roles. Key governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school. The governing body provides very good support whilst successfully maintaining its role as 'critical friend'. Regular visits ensure that governors are up to date about what is going on in the school, enabling them to play a full part in whole-school improvement planning.
25. The budget is well managed, and financial procedures are good. Governors plan the budget well to ensure that the available funding is used to best effect. Careful monitoring ensures that expenditure and income are closely linked. The school is in the first year of receiving a fully delegated budget, so no financial figures are available for the year 2003/2004.

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

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

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

The overall provision for personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

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

- Children of all abilities achieve very well from their different starting points.
- Teaching is very good, and adults set very clear parameters so that the children know exactly what is expected of them.
- Most children show very high levels of independence.
- Although the children are very confident about making choices about their learning, they do not always follow these ideas through.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know the children and their families very well, enabling them to provide very good levels of individual support.
- The school's very welcoming approach to parents and carers ensures that the children settle in quickly and are confident about coming to school.

#### **Commentary**

26. By the time the children leave school at the age of four, their attainment in personal, social and emotional development is above the level expected for their age. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve very well from their different starting points. Teaching and learning are very good, and adults use their knowledge of individual children and their families very well to ensure that the children receive the support and guidance they need to enable them to settle quickly into the routines of the school and to become confident, mature and independent learners. Very clear boundaries are set for the children so that they know exactly what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour.
27. The children are very happy to come to school, and the vast majority are confident about separating from their carers at the start of the day. The school is very supportive of children who are reluctant to leave their carers, and is happy for adults to stay with their children at the start of a session. As a result, the learning environment is very happy and relaxed, and the children go about their work in a purposeful and calm way.
28. Teachers and teaching assistants are very effective in the way in which they encourage the children to become as independent as possible whilst providing support where necessary. As a result, most of the children show very high levels of independence. The majority of children are very confident about making choices about their learning. During 'planning time', where the children select the areas for 'free-choice' activities, they make clear decisions about where they intend to work and with whom. However, in many cases, these initial plans are not fully translated into practice, and adults are not always sufficiently vigilant about encouraging the children to revise their plans on an ongoing basis.
29. The children's behaviour is good, and most show good levels of concentration and perseverance. Most children work well together, and there is often good interaction when the children are engaged in role-play activities, or when they use the computers.



Teachers are effective in the way in which they pick up incidental learning opportunities and in the way in which they encourage the children to develop the ability to express their feelings in a calm way.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

The overall provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

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

- Children of all abilities make good progress and achieve well.
- The good support of a part-time bilingual teaching assistant has a positive impact on the learning of children whose main language is not English.
- Adults effectively promote the children's spoken language through ongoing discussion and the good use of open-ended questions.
- The children have good listening skills.
- Early skills of reading and writing are taught well.
- Not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.
- The children do not have enough access to listening centres.

#### **Commentary**

30. By the time the children leave school at the age of four, their attainment in communication, language and literacy is at the expected level for their age. Children of all ages and abilities achieve well and make good progress. Children with English as an additional language receive good levels of support from a bilingual assistant, enabling them to take a full part in all activities. However, the support is only provided on a part-time basis, and so the impact of her input is limited. Teaching is good, and there is a good balance of 'free-choice' activities, and 'Small Group' activities that are led by an adult. However, although the school collects a very good amount of assessment information relating to the progress of individual children, not enough use is made of the information that is available when planning 'Small Group' activities. As a result, there are times when tasks are not as closely matched to the children's needs as they might be.
31. The promotion of the children's spoken language skills is an ongoing priority, and all adults are effective in the way in which they engage the children in discussion about their work. Teachers and teaching assistants use questions well to extend the children's thinking and to help them to develop their vocabulary. Where teaching is most effective, staff give children plenty of thinking time, enabling them to formulate answers to questions, or to consider how to frame a comment, idea or question. The children listen well to instructions, and process information well.
32. Reading is promoted as a pleasurable activity, and the children enjoy sharing books with their teacher or looking through books independently. However, there are not enough opportunities for the children to use listening centres so that they can share the pleasure of listening to a story whilst simultaneously following the pictures in the corresponding book. The children are encouraged to take library books home, and parents are given some guidance about how to share books with their children.
33. The early stages of writing are well taught, and the children have good opportunities to practise pencil control and to learn how to make different marks on paper. Older and higher-attaining children are beginning to link the ideas of reading and writing together,

and understand that what they commit to paper has a meaning that can be interpreted by others. Early writing skills are regularly taught through 'Small Group' activities, but more could be done to encourage the children to choose 'writing' activities as part of their 'free-choice' menu.

### **Mathematical development**

The provision for the children's mathematical development is **good**.

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

- Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well.
- There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that the children choose themselves.
- Adults provide a stimulating range of mathematical play activities.
- Good use is made of rhymes, songs and jingles to help children with their counting.
- Not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.

#### **Commentary**

34. Overall, attainment in mathematical development is at the expected level by the time the children leave the nursery. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. Teaching and learning are good, and there is a good balance of activities that are taught through 'Small Group' time, and those that the children access independently as part of their 'free-choice' activities. However, although teachers collect a very good range of assessment information which they convert into detailed individual profiles for the children, not enough use is made of this information when planning the 'Small Group' activities. As a result, although many of the activities are suitable, they are not always as well matched to the children's levels of ability and interest as they could be.
35. A strong feature of teaching is the good emphasis that is placed on the children learning about mathematics through a 'fun' approach. Daily rhymes, songs and jingles support the children well in their counting and help them to learn the order of numbers. Adults make good use of incidental teaching opportunities and often stop and talk to children about their work, encouraging them to count objects in their learning environment, or to talk about the position and relative size of objects and equipment. Teachers know the children well, and when working with individuals, extend the higher-attaining and older children by encouraging them to consider one more or less than a given number. Free-choice activities are well structured, interesting and stimulating. Equipment in the sand and water trays encourages the children to find out about capacity and to develop the language for making comparisons. Throughout the day, the children have good access to a range of mathematical equipment which they use with interest and good levels of concentration.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

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

- Teaching is good, enabling children of all abilities to achieve well.

- The children have access to a good range of stimulating 'free-choice' activities.
- The outside garden area is used well to support the children's learning and to encourage them to observe, investigate and explore.
- There are not enough opportunities for the children to learn about the past.
- There are many good opportunities for the children to make, build and construct models from a good variety of materials.
- The early ideas of religious education are well taught and very effectively promote the children's cultural development.
- The school does not have enough computers.
- Although teachers make good ongoing assessments of the children's individual progress and attainment, not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.

## Commentary

36. Children achieve well in knowledge and understanding of the world and, by the time they leave the nursery at the age of four, they are at the level expected for their age. Teaching and learning are good, and as a consequence, children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well. Teachers provide a good and wide range of activities that capture the children's interest. The teaching of key skills, knowledge and understanding through 'Small Group' activities is supplemented effectively by a good range of activities that the children choose themselves. Staff have worked hard to develop the outside garden area, and this is beginning to be used well as a learning resource for the children. During the inspection, good use was made of this area as the children explored the bog garden for mini beasts, using magnifying lenses to help them to observe more carefully.
37. Good provision is made for the children to learn about the local area, as they visit the church and shops, and look out on the surrounding area from a nearby car park. The children's geographical vocabulary is developed well as they listen to stories and learn about features, such as forests and bridges. Daily discussion about the weather and the completion of a simple group weather chart reinforces their understanding of the seasons. Although satisfactory, the provision for ensuring the children develop an early understanding of history through the exploration of the recent past is not as good. There are too few planned opportunities for the children to reflect on key events in their own lives or those of others, and few of the 'free-choice' or 'Small Group' activities are specifically planned to develop the children's appreciation of change and their knowledge and understanding of the past.
38. Staff are effective in providing opportunities for the children to consider aspects of the main faiths represented by the children who attend the school. Teachers introduce children to several key religious and cultural celebrations, such as Christmas, Eid, Divali and Chinese New Year. Shared activities are very effective in establishing a firm basis for the children's continued cultural development, and in raising their awareness of the cultural diversity within the school.
39. Opportunities for the children to work with different modelling equipment, materials and tools are good, and the children frequently choose making activities as part of their 'free-choice' menu. The children use the large building blocks well to create a variety of different environments, and during the inspection, created a large 'pirate boat' which they went on to use imaginatively as part of their role-play activities. Children regularly work with smaller building blocks and equipment, and spend good amounts of time constructing and deconstructing models. Older children have good manipulative skills

which they use well when hammering small nails onto boards, but the younger children still have some difficulty in using such precise tools and materials.

40. The children use the computers with high levels of enthusiasm and confidence. Although the majority of children are dependent on an adult for the initial setting up of the computer, most independently select different programs and understand the commands that are needed to progress from one screen to the next. Given the popularity of the computers during 'free-choice' activities, the current ratio of one computer to 18 children is too low. The children do not have enough access to other information and communication technology equipment, such as tape recorders, calculators and programmable toys, and resources to support this aspect of the children's learning are limited.

### **Physical development**

The provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities are provided through 'Small' Group' activities for the children to learn and practise skills of cutting, sticking and drawing.
- There is not enough direct teaching of large movement skills.
- Some of the outside play equipment does not provide enough challenge.
- The children have good access to ongoing 'free-choice' activities that promote good levels of co-ordination.
- There is not enough tracking of the children during 'free-choice' activities, and not all children have a daily period of physical exercise.

### **Commentary**

41. The children's attainment when they leave the nursery at the age of four is at the expected level for their age. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and adults often effectively develop incidental learning opportunities during the course of the session. However, there is not enough tracking of the children when they are involved in 'free-choice' activities. As a result, not all children have a daily period of physical exercise, and not all children go outside on a regular basis.
42. The effective direct teaching of fine motor skills, such as cutting, sticking and drawing, ensures that the children make good progress in developing control of tools and equipment, such as pencils, brushes and scissors. The children have many 'free-choice' opportunities to work with small pieces of construction equipment and small toys, ensuring that they are able to effectively practise and master newly taught skills. Whilst satisfactory, the provision for the development of the children's gross motor skills could be even better. Although the children have frequent and regular access to a wide range of wheeled toys, a climbing frame, and outside play areas, there is not enough direct and systematic teaching of skills, such as catching, throwing, jumping, hopping, skipping and balancing. Most of the wheeled toys are designed to be used by one child only, and this limits the opportunities for the children to work collaboratively. Some of the equipment in the main play area does not provide enough physical challenge for the highest attaining and oldest children.

## **Creative development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children have good access to a wide range of art and craft activities and to a wide range of media.
- There is a good balance of activities that the children select themselves and those that are led by an adult.
- The part-time specialist art teacher provides a very good range of opportunities for the children to develop their creative skills.
- The children have many good opportunities to sing, but too few opportunities to record music-making activities.
- At times, not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.
- Indoor role-play areas are used well, but not enough use is made of the outdoor environment for creative activities.

### **Commentary**

43. By the time the children leave school at the age of four, their attainment in terms of their creative development is at the level expected for their age. In the area of art and craft, many children are well on the way to attaining the early learning goals. Children of all abilities achieve well from their different starting points, and their achievement in art and craft is often very good. Teaching and learning are good overall, and there is a good balance of direct teaching and activities that the children choose themselves. However, adults do not always make enough use of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities, and at times, the direct teaching of key skills does not always fully reflect the needs of different groups of children. The part-time specialist art teacher makes a very good and imaginative contribution to the overall provision and introduces the children to a wide range of very different media, which successfully capture their interest and motivate them well in their work.
44. During 'free-choice' activities, the children have good access to a wide range of tools, equipment and materials. There are daily opportunities for them to paint, draw, cut, stick, and make models, and many of the children show good levels of concentration and perseverance in their work. Teachers display the children's work well, but do not always provide enough annotation to show parents and other observers the skills the children have learned or the techniques and media they have used. Very good emphasis is placed on the children working independently, and they confidently select the resources they need, making clear choices and decisions. The children work well together on shared activities, with the most mature children spontaneously helping one another with more difficult tasks, such as cutting sticky tape or using hole-punches.
45. Singing is a key feature of the daily routine and the children enthusiastically join in with well-known rhymes, jingles and action songs. They have a wide repertoire, and adults skilfully choose songs that reinforce the sequence of the days of the week, help the children to express feelings, or support their learning of numbers. During 'free-choice' activities, the children are able to play a range of musical instruments, but there are too few opportunities for the children to record their music and to replay it. Although the range of musical instruments is small, it appropriately includes a range of ethnic instruments, and a good balance of tuned and untuned instruments.

46. The children have good access to two main role-play areas, one of which is currently a Travel Agents' Shop, and one of which is currently a home area. In addition to promoting the children's creative development, the role-play areas are also effective in developing the children's personal and social development as they work interactively in small groups. However, the home area is rather cramped and cluttered, and given its popularity with the children, this presents some difficulties when several children choose to work in this area at once. Although the children use some equipment, such as prams, to move seamlessly between the inside and outside play areas, not enough thought has been given to other ways of linking the two areas to extend the children's imaginative play.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	8
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	2
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).*