

INSPECTION REPORT

PHOENIX NURSERY SCHOOL

Blakenhall, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104281

Headteacher: Ms Brigitte Baxter

Lead inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole

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

Inspection number: 267495

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:	37
School address:	Phoenix Street Blakenhall Wolverhampton West Midlands
Postcode:	WV2 3JS
Telephone number:	01902 558126
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Christine Cope
Date of previous inspection:	6 th July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Phoenix Nursery is located in Blakenhall, Wolverhampton and draws its children from the locality, which is in an area of socio-economic deprivation. Currently, there are 58 children on roll (42 boys and 16 girls). The majority attend part-time each day either in the morning or afternoon and 16 attend full-time. Children start school around their third birthday. The children's levels of achievement on entry to school are well below those expected for children of this age. Six of the children have special educational needs. The school admits children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and 21 are at an early stage of learning English. Their main languages are Panjabi and Gujarati. The school received a Charter Mark and achievement award in 2003. It is part of an area involved in New Deals for the Community. The school was given a delegated budget from April 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	English as an additional language; Foundation Stage curriculum.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a good school which is very inclusive. The children achieve well in the areas of learning. Leadership and management are good. The children benefit from good teaching and learning. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress
- The headteacher leads the school with purpose and drive and has created an effective team
- Progress in communication, language and literacy is slower than in other areas of learning
- Teaching is well focused and assessment is used effectively to plan work
- Some group sessions are too long and this results in a dip in the rate of learning
- The school provides a good curriculum
- The care and well being of children are particularly good
- The school involves parents effectively

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in July 1999. The issues raised have been tackled systematically and provision in the areas of learning is much improved and has brought better standards in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Leadership and management now have a good grip on monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Teaching and learning have improved. The school is well placed to build upon its good provision.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Inspection evidence shows that boys and girls **achieve well** in the areas of learning. Most children have levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below those expected for their age when they start school, and there is a wide spread of ability. By the time they leave the school, standards in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are at an appropriate level for the age of the children and they are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Standards in communication, language and literacy are below those expected for the children's ages. Progress in almost all aspects of learning is good with children making most gains in areas where they are not so dependent on communication skills. Most children have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly using a broad range of vocabulary. They work effectively on their own and in groups and most stick at tasks for extended periods. They make good progress in writing although their speaking skills are below those expected for their age. Progress in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory but could be improved by extending children's early reading and speaking experiences.

More able children do well and some are working at levels which are in advance of those expected. Children with special educational needs make good progress, benefiting from specific individual education plans which are used very well by support staff to set well matched work. Children at an early stage of learning English make good progress and bi-lingual teaching contributes very effectively to their progress. There is no significant difference in the performance of the different ethnic groups. The staff identify the needs of boys and girls effectively. They provide good opportunities for the children to work in variety of ways to stimulate their interest. Girls are slightly more successful than boys in communication, language and literacy whereas boys show more confidence in physical activities.

The school's **good provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**, contributes much to their lively and positive interest in the school. Children behave well and have a keen interest in learning. They develop good relationships with each other and with adults. They show much appreciation of different cultural traditions and are prepared very well for life in a diverse

society. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Most children are punctual. The staff work hard to encourage the parents to bring their children to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The good quality of education is underpinned by **effective teaching and learning**. Assessment is used well to identify the needs of the children and to plan work which is matched to their needs. Almost all aspects of the areas of learning are taught well, although more focus is needed on improving children's speech and breadth of vocabulary. Sessions are planned thoroughly and prepared well using a variety of resources. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory overall and good in developing writing skills. Good relationships, effective intervention for those with special educational needs and skilled bi-lingual teaching help to meet the needs of all groups as staff are clear about the specific requirements of individuals. The children are responsive and most listen well and concentrate effectively for extended periods. Most sessions include a good balance between adult led and child chosen activities, although some group sessions are too long and the pace of learning dips, especially when the groups are large. Staff make accurate observations of the children at work and use the information well to track their progress and set targets. Staff understand how boys and girls learn, and provide a good curriculum to interest and motivate both groups. The curriculum is enriched through stimulating and challenging visits and the children thoroughly enjoy opportunities to take part in festivals and celebrations. The school's resources and accommodation are adequate. There is a good number of well qualified teachers and support staff. This caring school supports the children and their families effectively.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher takes a good lead in curriculum development and is supported very well by staff, who make an effective team. The school has good systems for management which include the use of data analysis to monitor the children's performance and to set targets for the staff. Governance is good. The governing body is keen and well informed about the school but has limited experience of monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Governors have ensured that all statutory requirements are met. They are new to governance but are rapidly improving their skills through training. Good headway has been made in using a delegated budget. Financial management is effective and spending priorities are linked to the school's good development plan. The school is at an early stage of using best value principles to measure its success but uses these principles satisfactorily in purchasing supplies and services.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with their children's progress and the way in which the school involves them. The children obviously enjoy school and build successful relationships with their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the rate of children's progress in communication, language and literacy by providing more focused opportunities to improve the children's speech and language
- Improve the pace and organisation of some of the group sessions to enable more consistent learning

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children of all abilities achieve well. By the end of their time at the nursery most children are working at levels appropriate for their age in most of the areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys and girls make good progress and achieve well
- Children could do better in speaking and reading
- Children at an early stage of learning English make good progress
- Those with specific learning difficulties achieve well

Commentary

1. The school has been successful in raising standards since the previous inspection and in tackling the issues it raised about communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Improvements to planning and assessment have also brought more consistency to progress. Good analysis of the children's attainment on admission enables staff to set challenging targets for achievement in the areas of learning. The school is largely successful in achieving these targets.
2. The staff work hard to overcome several barriers to learning. Most children start school with well below average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding and are especially weak in communication skills. A high proportion of children come from homes where English is not the main language. The area in which the children live is one of significant socio-economic deprivation. In recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of children with special educational needs. The school compensates for these barriers by a good curriculum, effective teaching and well focused support for different groups or individuals with specific learning needs.
3. By the end of their time in the nursery most children are working at the expected level for their age in almost all of the areas of learning. They make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and most are secure in working alone or in groups. They develop positive attitudes to learning and improve their skills of concentration, competently sustaining interest in tasks for extended periods. Progress in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory overall and good in early writing and listening. However, children's spoken language and early reading skills could be better. Most struggle to hold a conversation and have a limited vocabulary. The teaching of these aspects needs a sharper focus. Children's achievement in mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is good and they progress at a good rate because of the good practical opportunities provided.
4. Some children have a wide and complex variety of special educational needs. These include social and emotional as well as learning difficulties. The staff provide effectively for these children through well crafted individual education plans which pinpoint each step needed to help the children make good progress. Skilful intervention and well timed praise and reward contribute much to the children's growing levels of competence. Although the children are working at a level which is below that of their peers they make good progress, especially in personal, social and emotional development. Children at an early stage of learning English benefit from good expertise in the teaching. The skilful use of a variety of languages in the teaching enables these children to take a full part in activities and to make good progress. The

use of these languages also contributes to all children's appreciation of cultural and linguistic differences. The school's good assessments and inspection evidence show that there is little significant variation in the performance of the different ethnic groups. The staff show a good understanding of the different ways in which boys and girls sometimes learn. By providing well balanced activities and many practical opportunities they encourage boys and girls to participate in all of the areas of learning. There is little difference in the performance of these groups although girls tend to show more interest in and are more successful in writing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The children respond well to the consistently good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school. As a result, they are happy, behave well and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, achieving satisfactory levels for their age. Attendance levels are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond with enthusiasm to the range of activities provided for them
- There are very good relationships between the children and the adults who work with them
- All staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour and work consistently and successfully to achieve this
- A small number of parents do not bring their children to the nursery regularly enough

Commentary

5. The good provision for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional development ensures that the children understand what is expected of them and begin to develop the confidence to choose sensibly and share activities. The sensory room encourages children to experiment and they enjoy the exciting and often unexpected outcomes of their actions. Because the children are constantly encouraged to make their own independent choices, many are beginning to play without adult direction on their own or with their friends. This developing confidence is evident in the way that some children move from one activity to another, observing the routines of the classroom and sharing the resources with good humour. A few of the younger children, however, tend to wander from one thing to another, often on the periphery of a group. Most children are learning to collaborate together, to take turns and help each other. Staff always listen to the children and value their ideas, using praise well to motivate them to try a bit harder. The good quality of these aspects of children's development has been maintained well since the last inspection.
6. Because of the good support provided for those children with special needs or who are at an early stage of learning English, all the children play a full part in the life of the nursery. Outside play is very popular. The organised games are accompanied by squeals of excitement and delight and all children take part with energy and enthusiasm. The children enjoy listening to stories and singing rhymes, complete with all the actions. The Special Person's choice of music was greeted with great anticipation and, when the music started, many children leapt into the middle of the circle and jumped up and down with great enjoyment. Visits are arranged to local places of interest and this has a very good impact on their social and cultural development. The visit to an outdoor centre makes a significant contribution to children's social development, teaching them how to play safely and extending their game playing skills. Parents are supportive of the values promoted by the school and this is an important element in the children's on-going personal, social and emotional development. They are also involved in promoting their children's cultural development, contributing their own experiences and time to teach the children about other ways

of life. Religious festivals are celebrated and this widens the children's perspective of the importance and excitement associated with other cultures and beliefs.

7. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance. Although most parents bring their children to school regularly and on time, there are a small number who take their children on extended holidays. A few do not keep the school advised of reasons for absence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are effective and underpinned by the use of accurate assessment. The school's curriculum is good and enriched with a wide variety of opportunities.

Teaching and learning

Teaching meets the needs of the children well and helps the children to become good learners. Staff assess the children's work effectively and use the information to plan sufficiently challenging work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children at an early stage of learning English are taught well
- Planning and assessment are thorough and well focused
- Teaching of communication, language and literacy is not as strong as in other areas
- There is good support for children with special educational needs
- Some large group sessions lack sufficient pace
- Children enjoy learning and work productively

Commentary

8. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and this has had a beneficial impact on children's learning. Assessment has a much sharper focus and contributes well to learning. Through regular and effective monitoring the headteacher has brought more consistency to the quality of teaching and learning.
9. The staff plan together and all are clear about learning objectives for each session. Planning is thorough and links well with the guidance in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The process includes specific reference to the needs of individuals and the identification of children who will be the centre of observations during particular sessions. At the end of sessions, the planning is reviewed and any key achievements noted are used to identify the next round of plans. This leads to consistency in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. The teaching meets the needs of individuals as staff know the children well and have very good relationships with them. Good use is made of praise and reward to encourage even the most diffident to have a go. The children respond well in this positive atmosphere and work hard, maintain good concentration and are productive workers. They are keen to please their teachers. Staff provide a generally good balance between direct teaching of skills and allowing the children to make choices. The effective tracking system ensures that all have access to and become involved in the opportunities on offer. Staff record the children's progress making careful observations and use this information to move the children on. This is done through effective questioning.

10. In each session the children experience opportunities of working in groups and on their own. Older children often spend much time working in self-chosen groups and show good skills in their personal, social and emotional development. However, some adult led sessions do not work well as there are too many children in a group with a diverse range of learning and social needs. This means that too much time is spent on disciplining and organising individuals which disrupts the flow of learning. Progress in these sessions is rather slow. Conversely, when children are grouped according to specific needs their learning proceeds at a good rate. This was seen in a good lesson in the sensory room with a group of children with learning difficulties. They were absorbed by the effect of the ultra-violet lighting, and with much enthusiasm used fluorescent pens to practise drawing and writing. Progress was rapid and children had a good sense of achievement.
11. Children at an early stage of learning English are taught well. The school has good resources to support the learning of English and high levels of expertise among the staff mean that the children are able to participate in lessons and gain in understanding of new ideas in their home language as well as English. The effective team teaching approach using several languages benefits all groups of children. Staff are quick to identify any specific learning needs among the children and provide good support and teaching. Individual education plans are of good quality and all staff use them effectively to enable the children to grow in confidence and competence in all of the areas of learning. Staff take good account of the needs and different learning styles of boys and girls.
12. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory overall although writing is taught well. There are good opportunities for the children to practise writing, including guidance on forming letters as well as activities which encourage “note-taking, writing prescriptions and lists.” Insufficient attention is given to developing the children’s spoken language. Although staff introduce new words and phrases, insufficient attention is given to encouraging the children to repeat key words and phrases and their speech is often indistinct. Discussions in some activities revolve around social events rather than prompting the use of technical vocabulary and in encouraging the children to explain what they done. Each day there are story telling sessions but children have limited access to a wide variety of non-fiction books in their play.
13. The teaching of the other areas of learning is good. Mathematical development is promoted through practical work and the use of apparatus, number rhymes and a variety of games. Skills and techniques in creative and physical development are reinforced daily and there is sufficient challenge to move learning on at a good pace. Staff intervene effectively making suggestions and asking good questions which stimulate the children’s interest and enthusiasm. In a very good session outside, the children participated enthusiastically in a variety of games, giggling excitedly when being chased by the *Big Bad Wolf*. Knowledge and understanding of the world is taught well and the rich curriculum and opportunities provided through visits to an environmental centre stimulate very effective learning and understanding about the natural world.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	16	10	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The staff provide a good curriculum which meets the needs of boys and girls effectively. Interesting visits and visitors enrich the quality of the curriculum. There is a good number of staff. The school's accommodation and resources are adequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is inclusive and meets the needs of children of all backgrounds and abilities
- There are exciting opportunities to learn about the environment
- The school makes good provision for special educational needs and for those children at an early stage of learning English
- The school's accommodation is in need of refurbishment

Commentary

14. The school has improved this aspect of its provision since the previous inspection and this has contributed to improvements in teaching and learning. The curriculum meets requirements and is planned using the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. It meets the needs of the children well. Staff show a strong commitment to inclusion reflected in the good provision for children with special educational needs. This provision is organised efficiently and parents are well informed and involved. Individual education plans are sharply focused and used effectively. The staff have good skills in working with children with specific difficulties. The nurture groups for children with special educational needs and for those at an early stage of learning English are especially effective. Children from ethnic minorities with limited English are supported well by staff who have significant expertise in a variety of languages. The school has a good range of resources to support children with English as an additional language.
15. The curriculum is well balanced and sufficiently challenging. Planning is thorough and amended daily to ensure that activities are matched to the children's needs. The curriculum is managed effectively and children have good access to each of the areas of learning. Staff make good links between the areas and this helps to promote learning consistently. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education and children are well cared for. There is a suitable emphasis on healthy eating and the outdoor curriculum is used to promote exercise and a healthy lifestyle.
16. The curriculum is enriched by stimulating and challenging opportunities. The regular visits to an outdoor centre do much to raise the children's awareness of the natural world. The links made between the areas of learning on these visits enable the children to gain understanding of new ideas and vocabulary and to learn about their responsibilities for caring for living things. Other celebrations in the nursery promote the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Involvement of parents in learning about foods from a variety of cultures and in taking part in festivals enrich the children's understanding and contribute well to personal, social and emotional development.
17. The school is staffed with a good number of teachers and nursery nurses who have a good range of expertise and experience. They are keen to improve their skills and attend courses regularly. These opportunities are linked to the school's priorities and to adult's professional needs

identified through appraisal. The school's resources are adequate and used well. The sensory room is an effective resource which is used to generate the children's interest in learning. The good outdoor area is well equipped and staff vary the resources used to present children with changing challenges. The accommodation is satisfactory but in need of refurbishment. The décor is rather worn and some of the furniture needs replacing.

Care, guidance and support

The children are well cared for. Very good relationships between the staff, parents and the children ensure that each child receives a very good level of support, advice and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff and governors are strongly committed to the welfare of every child
- The provision for each child's individual needs is very good

Commentary

18. An appropriate range of policies and procedures ensures that the school provides a safe and healthy environment. Regular checks of the premises are recorded and fire drills are carried out each term. Although staff have first aid skills, there is currently no fully qualified first aider. The headteacher has overall responsibility for child protection issues and awareness amongst all staff of the crucial nature of this aspect of care is very high. Supervision of the children whilst in the outside play area and on visits is very good and the children are taught how to move around and play safely. The standards of provision overall have improved since the last inspection.

19. The children and their parents trust the staff and know that someone will help them if they are concerned or unhappy. Children's personal, social and emotional development is monitored well and the information gained is used to plan support and activities appropriate to individual needs. Any emerging concerns are identified early and action is taken, usually in consultation with parents. Children make their individual likes and dislikes known and, in this way, they have an influence over the activities planned for them. There are very good opportunities for parents to talk to staff at the beginning and end of each session to pass on any concerns, or simply to stay with their child until he or she is happily settled. The induction process for new parents and children is good, enabling staff to form a clear picture of a child's needs and to build a supportive and positive relationship with parents prior to the child joining the nursery. This ensures that the children arrive at school happily and parents have confidence that their small children will be well cared for.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with parents, the local community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents value the work of the school and the care taken of their children
- The school provides very good opportunities for informal consultation with parents
- The use of facilities in the local community to enrich children's learning is good
- There is limited support for the opportunities provided for parents to learn how to help their children

Commentary

20. The school provides good information for parents about the school and members of staff are available to interpret when required. The prospectus clearly tells parents what they need to know about their child's first step into formal education and the good induction process expands on this. Examples of children's work displayed around the school, each of which is related to the relevant part of the Foundation Stage curriculum, help parents to understand the learning purpose of the activity. Informal contact between parents and staff is an integral part of each day and strong, friendly and supportive relationships were seen. Parents are formally invited to meet staff to discuss their child's progress twice during the year and are welcome to ask for more information if they need it. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in the decision making process. While many parents play an important role in helping and encouraging their children with their learning, there are a significant number who are unable to do this because they lack English language skills. The school's accommodation also restricts opportunities for parental workshops. Family Learning courses have been offered, and have been valued by those parents who have attended, but these have now been withdrawn because of lack of support. Parents with special skills share them with the children. For example, a doctor is to visit the nursery to talk about his work, linked to children's role play in the surgery, and parents have also given their time to talk to their children about their own diverse backgrounds.
21. The children visit interesting places within the local community and specialist visitors come into school to extend the children's learning. Good systems ensure effective transition to the next stage of education and links with other schools in the area are strong and mutually beneficial.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. There has been good improvement in leadership and management since the previous inspection because of good guidance and direction by the headteacher. Management systems are well organised and effective. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good headteacher leads with determination and vision
- All staff are committed to improving the school and work together well
- The school's strategic plans are well focused
- Good use is made of data to set challenging targets
- Governors are at an early stage of monitoring the school's performance

Commentary

22. The headteacher and staff have tackled the issues raised in the previous inspection report effectively and improved the quality of education. There is a shared and clear understanding of the school's aims and objectives and the staff work together to ensure they are met. The headteacher shows good determination in leading the staff and is successful in delegating responsibilities and in monitoring how well the school is performing. This works well in analysing the children's attainment on admission and in using the information to set targets which are reviewed regularly. This information feeds the planning and is used to identify the differing needs of the children of all abilities. Staff create a positive ethos in which all are valued

and contribute to school development. Performance management works well and a system of appraisal for support staff ensures that all are involved in professional development. The school is a good provider of training for students.

23. A good strategic plan includes sharply focused objectives and measures of success. It correctly identifies the school's priorities and is the result of good self evaluation. The headteacher and her staff are critical of their performance and have a realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The development plan is a useful document to point the way forward. The school has recently been given delegated powers and good use is made of the budget to enable the staff to meet the targets in the development plan. Good financial systems are monitored by senior staff and governors. The school is at an early stage in using best value principles other than for making decisions about spending on supplies and services. Governors have plans to extend these principles to measuring the school's success by linking standards to the effects of spending. An example of the good use of funds is the way in which opportunities are provided for the children to visit an environmental centre.
24. The governing body is new and has made good headway in developing its role since delegation. Governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school and bring a wide range of expertise. Some are regular visitors. The governors have ensured that the school meets statutory requirements in providing good policies and practices for racial equality, equal opportunities and access for people with disabilities. Their role in monitoring the school's work is at an early stage of development. Governors have attended a good range of courses and training to equip them to meet the changing needs of the school.
25. The school is well organised and runs efficiently. Management systems make sure that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The school has coped well with recent staffing difficulties. Effective monitoring ensures that there is a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The curriculum is managed well and there are different approaches to making learning effective. The management of groups varies in quality. When tasks are set for particular groups the organisation is effective but in large groups some children struggle and the pace of learning drops as time is spent in dealing with niggling incidents rather than in focussing on teaching. Specific needs for staff are clearly identified and training given where needed. The management of the provision for special educational needs is efficient and effective and staff are up to date in their training. The provision for children at an early stage of learning English is also managed well and, although funding for this aspect has been reduced, the headteacher and governors have made a wise decision to employ the staff to work in other areas such as developing family learning. This has helped to improve parental involvement in their children's schooling.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well
- Teaching is good
- Children enjoy the stimulating range of activities that are provided for them and they soon learn to share resources and work with other children
- Personal, social and emotional development permeates all activities
- Some children find it difficult to cope when sessions are too long or when working in large groups

Commentary

26. The most striking aspect of the nursery is the extent to which the teachers and other staff understand the personal and emotional needs of all the children. The staff are clear about the potential of each child because of thorough assessment and communication with parents before the children are admitted. This information is used to plan work which meets the needs of all. The children soon learn to choose an activity and to work on their own. The staff intervene effectively to gently prompt the children to try new activities, thereby ensuring that they experience all areas of learning each day. By the time they leave the school most children are working at the expected level for their age in personal, social and emotional development and this equips them well for work in the other areas of learning. There has been good improvement in the provision since the last inspection. The good teaching focuses well on helping the children to socialise and co-operate and there are good opportunities to work independently. This area of learning contributes much to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as children are given opportunities to learn about and celebrate each other's cultural traditions.
27. The children quickly become confident and secure but some sessions are too long or groups are too large making it difficult for them to sustain concentration or to stay on task. The staff alleviate this to some extent as they are always on hand to attend to the needs of every child, but some valuable teaching time is lost. The children are familiar with the routines and participate in all activities with interest and enthusiasm. On arrival they come in and put their coats, books and bags in the correct place, and choose from the many activities set out throughout the nursery. When prompted, they sit on the carpet and are ready to join in group sessions. After going to their groups they reply politely to adults and other children. A special person is chosen each day which helps towards raising the children's self-esteem.
28. Underpinning the teaching are the very good relationships shared by staff and children. In discussions about planning prior to the session the staff pinpoint particular areas for development for individuals and then monitor their response. Staff skilfully encourage the children to take turns and to respect the needs of others. A good example is in the welcoming session when the children confidently share their news or special information. This encourages an ethos of mutual

trust and respect between adults and children. Children grow rapidly in confidence and many examples were seen of them concentrating extremely well for extended periods. They enjoy taking responsibility such as helping to tidy equipment away at the end of each session.

29. The provision is led and managed effectively and all staff are clear about their role in promoting children's learning. Assessment is well focused and accurate and is used well to track the children's progress and plan activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in early writing skills
- Standards in reading and speaking are below those expected for children of this age
- Teaching does not always focus strongly enough on promoting spoken language
- There is good teaching of children at an early stage of learning English

Commentary

30. The provision has improved since the previous inspection especially in developing children's writing skills but more remains to be done to accelerate the children's progress in speaking and reading. There is little variation in the performance of the different ethnic groups in the school. Children at an early stage of learning English benefit from significant support in this area of learning and this enables them to access the activities on offer. Expert teaching using the children's home languages alongside English speed up the pace at which children learn and help all in the nursery to appreciate differences in language and tradition. Several children have specific learning needs in communication and the staff are keenly aware of the small steps needed to make learning effective. Good individual education plans are used extensively and staff keep detailed records of the children's achievements to assess their progress and to plan the next step in learning.
31. The children are successful writers because there are many and varied opportunities for them to practise and refine their skills. At the start of the day children often choose to register themselves and with the help of adults they practise writing their names. Their books show good improvement in this skill and the more able form several letters correctly. Informal opportunities such as writing lists, acting as scribes for a group and writing letters help the children to understand that text conveys meaning.
32. The children generally listen well although some find it difficult to concentrate in large groups. Most can communicate their basic needs but more opportunities are needed to extend the children's vocabulary and to provide good role models in speech. Staff do correct common mistakes but rarely insist on the children repeating the correct phrase or sentence and this means that opportunities are lost and progress is rather slow. There are good examples of developing conversational skills in role play and in outdoor play where the children learn correct vocabulary for their scientific work on water and sponges. There is a good emphasis on developing the children's awareness of the sounds that letters make and in recognising the names of letters.

Regular story times, rhymes and singing provide opportunities for the children to make satisfactory progress in reading. However, few children select books from choice and “read” quietly on their own. In some documentation the staff provide books to support learning but this resource is underused. Good opportunities at the end of the session are used for browsing.

33. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and good in developing writing. Relationships between staff and children and adults are good and children are encouraged to work hard. The school’s initiatives in developing writing are working well and the staff consistently encourage and praise the children. However, the overlong group sessions mean that some children lose concentration and can be disruptive in story and discussion sessions. The large groups often include children who find it difficult to relate to others and who want to be the centre of attention; on some occasions they tend to disrupt the flow of lessons. When planning activities the staff identify key vocabulary but do not always focus the children’s attention on learning new words and on using them for themselves. Sometimes discussions in activities focus more on being sociable rather than on extending vocabulary.
34. The leadership and management of this area of learning are satisfactory. Staff make careful observations of the children using notes and photographs and build up a picture of the children’s achievements. These good records are not always used well enough to identify the next stage in learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good
- Children of all abilities achieve well
- There are insufficient opportunities for the more able children to solve problems
- This area of learning is led and managed effectively

Commentary

35. By the time they leave the school, most children are working at levels which are appropriate for their age. Children with special educational needs make good progress in basic number work but their limited understanding hampers their progress in using mathematical vocabulary. Children at an early stage of learning English are given good support and they make good progress in number work learning to count in their home language as well as English. Throughout the nursery, the children’s knowledge of number is well developed. They enjoy using number rhymes and develop a good understanding of sequencing, shapes and measures. Most count competently to 10 and the more able use numbers to 20 confidently. The staff provide many opportunities for the children to use their counting skills. Every day they count objects, sort shapes and use a variety of measures to determine more or less. Teachers and nursery nurses exploit every opportunity to allow the children to develop their number skills. The children make good progress deducting numbers from ten when they sing familiar songs and rhymes which they do with great gusto. They create patterns with shapes using paint and collages. When playing a game, the children match a shape represented on a dice to those in the box, using the correct mathematical term. The

more able children were not always well challenged in these small groups as they had already grasped the key characteristics of two-dimensional shapes.

36. A strength in the teaching is the use of number rhymes and songs. Consequently, the children develop a good understanding of the language of mathematics. More able children are beginning to compare the relative size of numbers using 'more than' or 'less than' with increasing confidence and awareness. This is further reinforced when the children play with containers in the sand and water areas. The staff prepare good question and answer sessions so that learning builds on previous understanding but for some more able children, problem solving activities are not always emphasised or extended sufficiently.
37. The children understand and develop positional language well, including 'on', 'under' and 'beside', and there is effective teaching of these concepts through outdoor play. Good opportunities are provided by the staff for the children to compare the size of objects or predict if one container will fill another, as when one child predicted that the small container would fill up first when emptying and filling in the water tray.
38. Mathematical development is organised and managed effectively. Staff make good use of assessments of the children's skills on admission to the school to set targets and to plan work which is generally matched well to the children's needs. Through careful observation and focused record keeping the staff track the children's development and keep parents informed of their progress. The school has adequate resources to support the children's mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of activities that capture the children's interest
- Children of all abilities achieve well
- The development of ICT skills is good
- The curriculum is stimulating and challenging

Commentary

39. The children make good progress and, by the time they leave the school, they reach the standards expected for their age in this area of learning. Children at an early stage of learning English benefit from good support and opportunities to take part in stimulating activities which enhance their vocabulary and understanding. Staff work successfully to include children with special educational needs in all activities and through the use of well focused individual education plans provide just the right level of support and guidance to enable the children to make good progress.
40. The range of opportunities to create collages, explore the garden or engage in role-play encourage the children to work together in comparing different materials. Language is promoted effectively through role play such as the doctors' surgery where children act as receptionists and nurses, and adults join in as patients. The children's curiosity about the world around them is

developing well and as they mature they increasingly become independent and confident learners. The school has improved the provision for knowledge and understanding of the world since the previous inspection.

41. Teaching and learning are good. The adults organise a very stimulating range of experiences to arouse the children's curiosity about, for example, how materials change when using dough or clay and the texture of pastry before and after making cakes, biscuits or chapattis. The children learn a range of basic skills when experimenting by making shapes in sand, glitter or flour or when drawing pictures and letters. These activities are planned well to link to the other areas of learning and to promote children's writing skills.
42. The school makes very good use of the local area and visits to a rural and woodland area in an outdoor education centre to enable the children to explore the woodland environment. On their visits the children make very good gains in learning about animal habitats, trees and plants and begin to notice seasonal changes to the environment such as autumnal colours on trees and plants. They excitedly answer questions about how to walk safely through the woodland and to respect the animals and habitats around them. Learning is made fun and the children's observational skills improve rapidly as they look down foxholes and rabbit scrapes and collect fallen branches, observing these with curiosity. The staff use these visits very well to focus on key vocabulary, environmental and scientific skills as well as helping the children to grow in confidence in unfamiliar surroundings. The activities are made fun, such as the very enjoyable game of hide and seek in the woods and when individuals played 'peek-a-boo' with each other or with an adult as they hid or emerged from behind a tree or bush.
43. Good use is made of familiar stories, themes and resources to improve the children's observational and scientific skills. Scientific skills are taught well as when the children were taken outside to experiment with wet and dry sponges. The children compare the relative weight of sponges and then enjoyed throwing the 'heavier' sponges, particularly when aiming at an inspector or another adult! Learning is made practical, relevant and very tactile, for example, when making splashing noises in the rain or commenting on the 'gooeyness' of dough before making cakes or bread. The children make good progress in using technology such as computers and notebook tablets, creating patterns and drawing pictures. Children benefit from the regular access to computers; an interactive whiteboard and notebook tablets as well as other technology such as digital cameras and a compact disc player. They take responsibility for changing the compact disc before "carpet time" and know how to use recorders, cameras and other devices.
44. Leadership and management of this area of learning are good. Staff plan thoroughly and look for links with other areas of learning. Good records of progress are kept and careful observations used to assess the children's attainment. This information is used to plan the next steps in learning. The provision contributes well to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially in learning to appreciate the beauty and diversity of the natural world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children of all abilities achieve well and attain average standards by the time they leave the school
- The teaching is good
- This area of learning is led and managed effectively

Commentary

45. The quality of the provision has improved since the previous inspection. Children of all abilities make good progress because the challenges set match their particular needs. Less mobile children with specific learning difficulties are supported effectively and encouraged to join in a variety of activities including action rhymes, small games and opportunities to play on the apparatus. Boys enjoy outdoor challenges and make good progress in climbing, balancing and running energetically. The girls are slightly less adventurous but move competently and in dance show poise and balance. Staff make good use of physical activities to encourage less confident children and those who have limited English to learn new words which they reinforce with action songs. The children make good gains in controlling their movements and the topic on movement greatly enhanced the children's awareness of space.
46. Group activities contribute well to the children's skills. In one activity the adult pretended to be the big bad wolf and the children eagerly listened and responded to this counting game, running excitedly at "dinner time", being careful to avoid collisions. Other traditional songs and games are used effectively to extend the children's vocabulary and sense of rhyme and rhythm. In a good activity the children found a space, chalked a spot for their boundary and then holding a scarf made energetic and twirling movements. The children apply good effort in their physical play and know that exercise is good for them and affects their heartbeat.
47. Teaching and learning are good and the staff keep good records of the children's progress. Sessions are planned thoroughly and a good balance is achieved between adult directed activities and freedom for the children to choose. All children participate in the activities and staff track their development through careful observation. Staff are knowledgeable about the different ways in which boys and girls learn and provide a good range of challenging resources to move learning on. Sessions have good pace and are about the right length to engage the children. In some lessons the staff promote language well and the use of bi-lingual assistants helps children at an early stage of learning English to participate fully. On some occasions opportunities are missed to extend the children's descriptive vocabulary about the different shapes and techniques they have used.
48. This area of learning is managed effectively and there are good links with other aspects of the children's work. For example, links are made with dance and music in creative development. Assessment is good because it identifies the skills achieved and the information is used to provide the next challenging step in learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage
- Teaching and learning are good
- The provision is linked well to the other areas of learning
- Creative development is led and managed effectively

Commentary

49. The school has made good headway in improving standards which are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. The children make good progress and achieve well because the range of activities provided and the consistent teaching of a variety of skills and techniques enable the children to experiment and explore with confidence. Children at an early stage of learning English are included effectively in all activities and skilful intervention by staff helps them to learn new words and to grow in competence in initiating their own learning. Timely intervention, careful questioning and support encourage the children with special educational needs to achieve well.
50. Children competently use a variety of materials and tools to express themselves. In the surgery, they pretend to be doctors and nurses while others make appointments and write prescriptions. Staff intervention in this activity enhances the children's vocabulary. Children use their imaginations well and a group of less confident children worked enthusiastically in the sensory room exploring writing with fluorescent pens while the room was lit with ultra violet lights. This activity motivated them very well and they made good progress in forming letters and drawing recognisable shapes. Staff give good guidance, teach skills well and then allow the children opportunities to experiment as in painting and making collage. There are good opportunities for the children to take part in musical activities and they particularly enjoy the regular practice of rhymes and songs which contribute well to their counting and sequencing skills.
51. One of the strengths in teaching is the way in which staff join in role play to encourage children to express their ideas. The good use of resources to prompt inquisitiveness also helps the children to begin to appreciate the wonders around them as they play with torches and find out about light and darkness. Staff expect much from the children and encourage them to select their own resources, use them carefully and clear them away after use. Staff have good skills in linking the children's creative development to other areas of learning, especially knowledge and understanding of the world and communication, language and literacy. Questions are well focused and designed to stimulate curiosity. The children respond very well to these opportunities and work hard often maintaining concentration for extended periods.
52. This area of learning is well organised and managed effectively. The school has a good range of resources to support the teaching and many of the activities create a sense of wonder and include opportunities for the children to use their senses to improve their understanding. Assessment is good and is used well to identify any strengths and weaknesses in the children's achievement. This information is then used to plan other activities to enhance the children's techniques and skills.

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	2
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	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
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	3
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).