

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROYAL SPA NURSERY SCHOOL**

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114351

Acting Headteacher: Mrs J Darton

Lead inspector: Mrs L Woods

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 267602

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996



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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Nursery  
School category: Maintained  
Age range of children: 3 – 4  
Gender of children: Mixed  
Number on roll; 40 (FTE)

School address: Park Hill  
Brighton  
East Sussex

Postcode: BN2 0BT

Telephone number: 01273 607 480

Fax number: 01273 694 335

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of  
governors: Ms J Simon

Date of previous 11<sup>th</sup> January 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Royal Spa is an extremely popular and over-subscribed nursery school with 80 part time boys and girls on roll. It is a disseminator of good nursery practice for the local education authority. Children travel from all over the city of Brighton to attend the school, with most children coming from above average socio-economic backgrounds. The school is also a central part of the local community. Parents do not willingly remove their children, once they have gained a place. The school celebrates its cultural diversity, with just over a quarter of children coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number, just two, of the children are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. Around 5 per cent of children are identified as having special educational needs, and one has a Statement of Special Educational Need. Overall, children's attainment on entry to the school is average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21079	Mrs L Woods	Lead inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development
8991	Mrs P Goldsack	Lay inspector	
24137	Mrs G Robertson	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Creative development

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
GL33 7JX

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

This is a **very good** school. Children join the nursery with average levels of attainment and thrive in its warm, caring environment. By the end of their relatively short time in the school, children are achieving well overall, and standards exceed expectations across the six areas of learning. This is the result of consistently very good teaching and learning, which provides lively, stimulating and interesting activities in every session. Leadership and management are very good, and it is a credit to the strength of the very close teamwork between all who work in the school that it continues to provide a very good education for the children whilst awaiting the arrival of the newly appointed headteacher. The acting headteacher, with governors' and her colleagues' strong support, is ensuring that the work of the school continues in a seamless way. Governance is very good, and very supportive of the school. The school provides **very good** value for money.

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

- Children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development to reach standards which are well above expectations. Achievement and attainment overall are good.
- Children's excellent attitudes to learning are a significant result of the consistently very good teaching from all practitioners, and the excellent relationships which exist throughout.
- The school provides a very good, rich, interesting and exciting curriculum, using its very good accommodation and resources to the maximum.
- Assessment is very thorough and provides a clear, comprehensive picture of the achievement and progress of each individual.
- The school cares very well for its children; it has excellent relationships with parents and very good links with the community and other schools.
- The school has an excellent ethos, and is deeply committed to ensuring all individuals have the best possible opportunities.
- Leadership and management are very good, supported by very good governance.

The school has maintained and improved on its many strengths identified in the last inspection in January 1999 when, as now, there were no key issues for improvement.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

#### **Standards at the end of the children's time in the nursery, ready to begin the reception year.**

Standards in relation to the stepping stones for learning by the end of children's time in the nursery in:	
Personal, social and emotional development	Well above expectations, with very good achievement.
Communication, language and literacy	Above expectations, with good achievement.
Mathematical development	Above expectations, with good achievement.



Knowledge and understanding of the world	Above expectations, with good achievement.
Physical development	Above expectations, with very good achievement.
Creative development	Above expectations, with good achievement.

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

Children of all abilities and backgrounds achieve **well** and make good progress during their time in the school, and very well in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical development. Achievement and attainment are well above expectations in personal, social and emotional development because this has the highest priority, being the foundation stone for children’s confidence in learning for the future. Very good achievement in physical development stems from very extensive use of excellent accommodation and very good resources in this area of learning. Experienced practitioners ensure that all children are provided with the challenge which matches their needs. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are very well supported and achieve as well as their peers. The knowledge and understanding of each individual means that children thrive in an atmosphere where there is no fear of failure.

Children’s attitudes are excellent. They really love coming to school and take full advantage of every opportunity provided to develop as sensible, well-motivated and independent learners. Their behaviour is very good, supported by the excellent relationships which permeate the school, the very high expectations and the consistent, excellent role-models provided by staff. Provision for children’s personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **very good** quality of education for its children. Teaching and learning are consistently **very good** by all staff; teachers, nursery nurses and assistants. The teamwork between these experienced practitioners is excellent. The excellent relationships which exist between all partners in the school and the very high expectations all adults have result in a lively, stimulating and exciting learning environment in which children thrive. Very thorough assessment provides the school with a very clear picture of the achievement and progress of each individual. The very good curriculum, supported by very good opportunities for enrichment, means that every session is packed with worthwhile activity. The school cares very well for its children, and has excellent relationships with parents. The partnership with other schools and with the community is very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are all **very good**. The acting headteacher has willingly undertaken the role following the retirement of the previous headteacher and unavoidable absence of the deputy headteacher, and together with the strong support from her colleagues, governors, parents and the local educational authority, has ensured that the excellent ethos and commitment to including all involved in the school have continued seamlessly. Very good management stems from very good systems, expectations and routines which are firmly embedded, and

fully understood, so that the school continues to run smoothly and efficiently. The support of the local education authority's consultative headteacher is reassuring, but not necessary on a day-to-day basis. Governors provide very good support and challenge for the school. They are knowledgeable, and enthusiastic, and fulfil all statutory responsibilities well.

### **PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are delighted that their children attend this very popular, over-subscribed school, appreciate all it does for their children and support its work wholeheartedly. Children love coming to school and thoroughly enjoy all the activities provided throughout the day.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school meets all statutory requirements and has no major areas for improvement.

Governors and staff must continue working hard to ensure that the school's very many strengths are maintained.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

#### Standards achieved in the areas of learning

Standards and achievement are **good** across all areas of learning.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well across all areas of learning, and very well in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their physical development.
- Standards in personal, social and emotional development are well above expectations.

#### Commentary

1. Children's attainment when they join the nursery is in line with expectations, and they thrive in this lively and stimulating environment. Boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well because of the very effective provision across all areas of learning, and very good teaching and learning. It is only the relatively short time children spend in the nursery, which precludes achievement and standards from being very good. The criteria for judging standards have changed since the last inspection, but overall achievement has improved since that time.

#### Standards at the end of the children's time in the nursery, ready to begin the reception year.

Standards in relation to the stepping stones for learning by the end of children's time in the nursery in:	
Personal, social and emotional development	Well above expectations, with very good achievement.
Communication, language and literacy	Above expectations, with good achievement.
Mathematical development	Above expectations, with good achievement.
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Above expectations, with good achievement.
Physical development	Above expectations, with very good achievement.
Creative development	Above expectations, with good achievement.

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

2. Careful planning ensures all aspects of each area of learning are covered in an imaginative, interesting and interlinked way, resulting in good achievement and above average standards overall. Elements of personal, social and emotional development are fundamental to all sessions. As a result, achievement and standards in this important area of learning are well above expectations. This stands children in very good stead when they move on to reception classes in other schools.
3. The excellent outdoor accommodation and very good resources to promote children's physical development are used very extensively. Children thoroughly

enjoy the opportunities provided, and this results in very good achievement in this area of learning.

4. Children with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and very good additional support helps them quickly to learn important basic skills. Children learning English as an additional language also achieve well and make good progress in acquiring an understanding of English and a vocabulary suitable for their age because of the very effective support they receive.

### **Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children's attitudes are **excellent**, their behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children show very high levels of interest in their work as a result of the wide range of exciting activities provided.
- Children have excellent relationships with each other and with adults, and as a result, behave very well.
- Children's personal development is promoted very well by carefully planned provision.

### **Commentary**

5. The very positive picture portrayed by the last inspection has been maintained and this aspect of the school's work remains a very strong area. It is clear that children enjoy coming to the nursery. Before the inspection, all parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting with the lead inspector agreed that children enjoy school and cannot wait to arrive at the start of sessions full of enthusiasm. Because daily routines are well established, children enter happily and leave their parents and carers confidently, ready to start work. Their enthusiasm is well maintained throughout their time at the nursery, because staff provide such a wide range of well planned, practical activities that engage the children's interest and imagination.
6. The quality of relationships among all those involved with the work of the nursery, and particularly the teaching staff, is extremely high. Adults are excellent role models and this leads to friendly, courteous behaviour and very high quality relationships amongst the children. Children play harmoniously together, sometimes for extended periods on one activity. They speak politely to one another; say 'please' and 'thank you', and older children help younger ones with classroom routines. A lovely example of this was seen when one motioned that it was time to listen, by pressing his finger to his lips as a signal and nodding meaningfully in the direction of the teacher. Children with special educational needs are equally positive in their attitudes and enjoy the extra help and support they receive, as do those learning English as an additional language.

7. Children's personal development is promoted very effectively by the nursery's work. A very well planned curriculum ensures children have very good opportunities to learn about their own and others' cultures and beliefs, to learn about themselves and to understand and respect the views of others. They can be relied upon to work independently and make good choices in deciding what to work at during each session. They understand they have responsibilities towards each other and need to work together very successfully to make the nursery a very happy place.
8. Children's attendance and punctuality continue to be good. Registers are completed during each session and the school is fully aware of each child's patterns of attendance. The school regularly reminds parents about the importance of prompt, regular attendance and parents value their children's place in the school. Children's prompt regular attendance has a positive effect on their progress in school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are consistently very good and supported by very good assessment. The curriculum is very good, and very well enriched. Very good accommodation and resources are used to the maximum. The school cares very well for its children. It has excellent links with parents, and very good links with the community and other schools.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good**. Assessment is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff are equally highly talented and expert practitioners.
- Children of all abilities and backgrounds receive the same high quality support and encouragement to do their best.
- The exciting and stimulating activities planned each day ensure a lively and productive learning environment.
- Assessment provides an exemplar of highly effective practice.

### Commentary

9. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection to be consistently very good. Experienced practitioners work as a highly effective team to provide the very best possible opportunities for the children in their care.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	11	5	0	0	0	0

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

10. All adults working in the school, teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants, as well as the army of willing parental helpers, share a common aim; to provide children with exciting, meaningful and engrossing learning experiences, with considerable success. All exhibit the same very high expectations and are equally adept at engaging children very well in thinking and talking about what they are doing as they work and play. They provide exciting challenge for the more and most able children, and sympathetic support for younger, less able or confident individuals. All efforts and contributions are valued equally highly, and children bask in a learning environment which is focused with children at its heart. As a result all children thrive in the warm, caring ethos and are very willing to have a go, without a fear of failure. They make good progress and achieve well in gaining confidence, a love of learning and a high degree of self-motivation. It is only the relatively short time children spend in the nursery which prevents attainment and achievement from being very good overall, but the skills and confidence they gain stand them in very good stead for their future education.
11. Experienced staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young children and the requirements of the curriculum. Planning ensures that all areas of learning infuse and permeate each session so that learning is exciting, relevant and fun. The organisation of the week's programme ensures that children receive a very good balance of taught and 'free choice' activities across the curriculum. The theme of butterflies and mini-beasts was apparent in many of the activities, and children entered school each day very keen to explore the exciting challenges that had been prepared for them. Activities encompassing all areas of learning promote very good play, which has positive impact on learning as well as enabling children to have great fun and enjoyment. For example, whilst digging in the earth to find bugs, children go on to make glorious mud puddles and pies!
12. Practitioners support children with special educational needs very well. They keep a careful monitoring eye on what these children are working on and intervene quickly to give help and encouragement where it is needed. Very effective one-to-one support ensures children learning English as an additional language quickly gain confidence to take a full part in the activities provided.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**Assessment is simple, easy to manage and yet very effective in providing teachers, parents and other schools with a comprehensive picture of attainment, achievement and value added.**

Assessment is very good and provides teachers, parents and receiving schools with a very clear picture of the achievement, progress and standards of each individual child. Systems are simple, but highly effective. The school very wisely and sensibly continues to evaluate children's attainment when they start school, and uses both formal assessment activities and informal 'post-its' to monitor and record specific focus targets and significant achievements. These are recorded on individual sheets known as 'transition documents' corresponding to the six areas of learning, using colour coding to match the stepping-stones across and through each area of learning. Thus, at a glance, a child's level, progress and achievement can be seen, and the value added by the school can be clearly established. These transition documents are used across the local education authority, so that information is readily accessible, no matter which school children transfer to. However, their simplicity makes them easily readable wherever a child might transfer.

## The curriculum

The curriculum provides a **very good** range of learning opportunities and is enriched **very well**. Accommodation and resources are **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very rich and varied curriculum provides many exciting and relevant experiences that are based on children learning through their play.
- All staff ensure all children are fully included in everything which is going on within the school.
- The school makes very good use of its partnerships with parents and the community to enrich the curriculum.
- Excellent outdoor play areas and grounds enhance the very good accommodation and resources.

### Commentary

13. Although requirements have changed since the last inspection, the school continues to provide a very good curriculum. The nursery team, led by the acting headteacher, plans a highly imaginative curriculum in which all the areas of learning are very closely interlinked to provide a very good range of connected, interesting and fun experiences. This has its foundation in children learning through play and promotes very effectively children's high achievement. The curriculum is evaluated rigorously, and planning becomes more flexible as the week progresses, as the information from evaluation is used to adapt experiences, extend others and to make very good use of all adult support.
14. Expertise from parents, grandparents from the community and other visitors is used very well to enrich the curriculum. Parents perform musically to the children, for example, and grannies spend time reading stories to entranced children. The varied cultural background of parents and families is used very well to enhance children's experiences. The school plans very regular visits to the nearby park and further afield. Every parent or carer willingly makes the effort to accompany their children on these valuable excursions, such as to the seaside to collect shells and pebbles, which are then beautifully decorated and displayed in the nursery.
15. The school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all its children is achieved through the very good support provided by adults for all children, whatever their need. All children with special educational needs have individual education plans highlighting their specific needs. The excellent ethos within the school promotes extremely high levels of inclusion, where all children are valued and supported, both academically and personally in a very happy and secure school environment. This prepares them very well for the move into reception classes at the end of their time in the nursery.



16. The quality and quantity of resources are very good and have improved since the last inspection. There is a plentiful supply of toys and equipment to teach all areas of the curriculum. Dedicated, well-qualified and very experienced staff work very closely together as a highly effective team. Resources are stored neatly and used very productively to support learning. There is a very generous supply of books, and teachers, nursery nurses, teaching assistants and parents make very good use of story bags with their collection of books with related accessories to help promote a love of reading among the children.
17. The school building has been extended and improved since the last inspection and now provides very good accommodation. The teaching areas provide appropriate space for the number of children enrolled. Whilst not generous in size, all areas are used very well and maintained to a high standard. The hard surface play areas outdoors and the grounds provide an outstanding environment for nursery children. This pleasant and well-maintained provision enables children to participate in a wide range of worthwhile outdoor activities such as gardening, sand, mud and water play, picnics, bike riding and organising their own imaginative games.

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

The provision for children's care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of children's achievement is **very good**. The involvement of children through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All staff members are devoted to the well-being of the children and provide a very high standard of care.
- Excellent relationships ensure that children are well known as individuals.
- Children receive very good support, advice and guidance.

### **Commentary**

18. Overall provision for the care, health and welfare of children has improved since the last inspection. All members of staff are devoted to ensuring the well-being and happiness of all children throughout the day, continuing the high level of individual care found at the last inspection. Risk assessments of the buildings and grounds are completed regularly by senior staff and governors. Those for class trips and any activity beyond the school grounds are detailed and up-to-date. Staff members are trained in first aid and children with specific health requirements or allergies are very well cared for. The school follows the local authority's Child Protection Policy. Requirements in this area are met fully, and all staff members are aware of their responsibilities. Parents are very pleased with the very high quality of care provided.
19. Children benefit very well from the excellent relationships found throughout the school. Children are secure and express themselves willingly because they are confident that adults will listen carefully to them. Children are involved well in

the life of the school. Daily routines encourage children to become independent and make decisions. For example, children register themselves when they arrive with their own name cards. They can select a piece of fruit and decide when to have snack. Teachers and nursery nurses will extend learning activities when a child is particularly engrossed and enjoying his or her success. Parents are very pleased with how the school encourages their children to become more mature.

20. The very good support and guidance given to children are based on thorough monitoring of their academic and personal achievements. The school makes very good use of the information it gathers on each child to help plan for the next step in learning and promote high standards.
21. The induction arrangements for new children and their parents are good. In the term before entry the school is closed for one day and new children thoroughly enjoy a session with a variety of activities while their parents meet with the headteacher, to learn about the school's routines and expectations. Parents are encouraged sensibly to remain with their children in the classroom when they start school, to help them settle and only depart when they are comfortable in their new surroundings. Children tend to settle quickly and enjoy their time in this school very much. Parents who made their views known during the inspection highly approve of the induction programme and agree that their children are happy in school.

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

The school's links with parents are **excellent**. The school's links with the community and other schools and colleges are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents' contribution to learning at school and at home is excellent.
- Links with the community and colleges contribute very significantly to the quality of children's learning.

## Commentary

22. The school deserves the very high popularity it enjoys among its parents. The very good partnership between the school and parents has been maintained and built upon since the last inspection. The school values its parents very much and works hard to engage them in sharing learning with their children. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The prospectus, governors' annual report and the new website are informative and helpful. Letters to parents about all aspects of school life and what their children will be learning are issued very regularly. Information about how children are progressing is exchanged verbally with parents on a regular basis and more formally at the end of the summer term, with parents and feeder schools receiving a very useful written report.
23. Parents' involvement in the life of the school and their children's learning continues to be excellent. Many parents, grandparents and members of the community volunteer to help in school with reading, crafts, cooking, organising resources and accompanying groups of children on outside activities. Parents also share their expertise with the school in areas such as music or art to help enrich activities. The Friends of Royal Spa is a well-organised support group that hosts very popular fundraising events throughout the year. They raise a significant amount of extra funding to cover transport costs for trips and for extra equipment. Parents are enthusiastic supporters of all events related to the school.
24. The school's very good links with the community have improved since the last inspection. There is a very good programme of visits and visitors to the school to help enrich the curriculum. The school maintains a very good link with Brighton University. This mutually productive partnership provides student teachers with valuable classroom experience and enables teachers to extend activities for children. The school's involvement with the Early Years Learning Development Centre enables other educators to visit the school each week and observe its very good practice. It also provided evening courses for Early Years practitioners. These activities very effectively enable staff members to refine their own skills, and help raise the profile of the school in the community.
25. There are very well planned arrangements to help children transfer to their reception classes. The school has close links with the three primary schools that many children move on to. Children will visit one of these schools during their last term and the reception teachers will visit the nursery. The school is limited in the scope of its transfer arrangements because children move on to about 20 different schools. However, all benefit from the detailed transfer document that is forwarded for each child.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Leadership is **very good**, management is **very good**, governance is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership and management stem significantly from the excellent teamwork and shared expectations amongst all staff.
- The very warm, caring ethos leads to excellent inclusion and equality of opportunity for all children.
- Governors support and challenge the school very well.

## **Commentary**

26. The very good leadership and management noted at the last inspection have very effectively been maintained and continue to drive this very good school. The acting headteacher has willingly taken on her unexpected responsibilities, following the retirement of the previous headteacher and unavoidable absence of the deputy headteacher, and the school continues to run in a very smooth, seamless way. This is very largely due to the excellent relationships between all who work in the school, so that the warm, caring ethos of shared responsibility and enthusiastic commitment is mutually supportive of all involved. The local education authority has provided invaluable backup in the shape of a consultative headteacher, but the systems operating in the school are so well embedded and understood, and the teamwork so well established, that this support is required only as insurance, and not as necessity.
27. The governing body provides very good support, with a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the value it adds to individual children, and very good challenge for its managers. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities well, and have taken great pains to ensure that they appoint a headteacher who will maintain and enhance the ethos of the school. They bring a good degree of expertise to their roles, and a significant level of practical support. They are fully involved in development planning and financial management, both of which clearly and fully focus on the needs of the school and the children it serves.
28. The staff team for the most part has worked together very effectively for a number of years, but those new to the school feel very well informed and very well introduced to its way of working. Shared vision, planning and delivery encompass all areas of learning, matching and complementing the very good overall leadership and management of the school, and ensuring that the school stays at the forefront of educational development. The school also provides very good support for trainee teachers, who report how very much they appreciate the experience of working here. The school's commitment to ensuring all children are fully included and provided with the very best possible start to their education is excellent. The provision for children with special educational needs is managed very carefully and there is good liaison with the outside agencies involved in supporting these children. Provision for the few children learning English as an additional language is also managed well, so that these children are fully involved in all activities.

## **Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

<b><i>Income and expenditure (£)</i></b>	
Total income	187 464
Total expenditure	179 695
Expenditure per child (FTE)	4 492

<b><i>Balances (£)</i></b>	
Balance from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to the next	7 769

29. The school has managed its own budget for just over a year, and has taken on responsibility for financial control with great enthusiasm. The secretary manages the day-to-day finances very well and financial planning overall is very securely based on the school's development priorities. The principles of best value are applied very well, and the small carry forward figure is earmarked to maintain staffing levels and to provide the new headteacher some flexibility when she takes up post in January 2006.

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

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and rich curriculum.
- Excellent teamwork by staff and excellent relationships ensure children feel secure and confident.
- Individual children's progress is monitored carefully, enabling staff to plan the next steps in learning for each child.
- Children develop the ability to work independently and to take responsibility very effectively.

#### **Commentary**

30. This area of learning is at the core of the school's work, as it was at the last inspection. Children's personal qualities are nurtured and developed very well and by the time they move on from the nursery most attain standards well above those expected for their age. All staff share a firmly held philosophy that young children learn best in a calm, well ordered and stimulating learning environment. They organise the day so that children are very clear about the routines, and set high expectations of courtesy and behaviour. As a result even the youngest children come happily into the setting, self registering by selecting their name, choose an activity and work with friends and adults in the day's activities. Children respond readily to the cue to tidy up, packing away toys and activities quickly and sensibly. A child helper will then move confidently around the building and outside area playing a chime bar for 'story-time'. Very well established routines give children a sense of security both inside and outside the classroom with the result that they tackle new activities with confidence and enthusiasm.
31. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. The very high quality relationships and excellent sense of teamwork that exist amongst staff have a very positive impact on children's social development. Children play together considerably, often for extended periods, sharing toys, games and equipment with one another. This co-operation is a strong feature of the outdoor play, where children share equipment and learn to play together with bats and balls and other equipment, or when they co-operate together in the mud puddles sharing spades, buckets and wheelbarrows. All children are treated, and treat each other, with respect. Staff make it a priority to talk and listen to children and their interest and care for them shine through. The integration of children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is very good, ensuring their involvement in all aspects of nursery life.

32. Staff constantly monitor children's progress, noting small steps in development and discussing individuals on a daily basis to help them plan the next stage of children's learning. Because they know children so well, they guide their play effectively and focus their questions and support on what each child needs to learn next. Exciting activities are planned with this in mind. The nursery promotes children's cultural and spiritual development very well. Children eat food from China during Chinese New Year and experience other cultures' stories; they use resources in role-play that reflect different cultures, such as dolls from different ethnic groups. There are quiet places such as book corners where children can sit and reflect, and the wonderful grounds of the nursery are a constant stimulus for activities that promote a sense of wonder and beauty.
33. There is very good collective leadership and management of this and all other areas of learning, with every member of staff contributing very positively to the successful outcomes.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's speaking and listening skills are excellent.
- Staff are very skilled at developing children's conversational skills and spoken language.
- All adults provide very good imaginative opportunities across the curriculum to develop children's skills in communication, language and literacy.

### **Commentary**

34. Children achieve well in this area of learning and by the time they transfer to their next school their attainment exceeds expectations. This good achievement has been maintained since the last inspection. Children do so well because there are many rich opportunities for them to communicate and develop their language and literacy skills. Staff constantly engage children in discussion, either in a large group or individually, in order to help them to articulate their thoughts and feelings. In one session, for example, a teacher worked with a boy to help him make a train. Her sensitive enquiry and questioning helped him explain what it was he wanted to make and what he needed to do to improve his first attempt. Practitioners work hard to help children who find difficulty in communicating because of special educational needs or because they speak English as an additional language. They gently encourage them to talk to other children or practitioners.
35. Well designed and equipped role-play areas help children to make up their own stories, not necessarily expressed verbally. This understanding of the idea of story helps children to enjoy the books readily accessible to them throughout the setting. Children also enjoy the regular story times at the end of sessions, where they meet in a small group with a member of staff to share a book together. Care is taken to use good quality texts, which hold the children

spellbound. Most children already understand that print conveys meaning and many recognise their own names. This is encouraged in many meaningful ways, by naming children's pegs, for example, and attaching a photograph of the child to help them to identify the right peg. Some children also recognise simple words and a few children read simple texts. Staff emphasise the enjoyment of stories and books when working with the children because they know that enjoyment lies at the heart of helping children to develop as successful and confident readers.

36. Children learn to communicate in writing from their first days in the nursery. They are encouraged to work with pencils and crayons in order to write down messages and lists in the role-play areas. During the inspection, children wrote their names for their creative work, with the teacher also writing it in 'her writing'. Some wrote their own stories in the same way.
37. Teaching is very good in this area, ensuring very good learning. Work is very well planned and careful records are kept of how well children are doing. Staff are sensitive to children's particular learning needs and step in quickly to help children when necessary. Resources, including books, are very well organised and very accessible to children and practitioners. Children's work is valued; a collection of the children's own pictures and writing is proudly displayed in many areas of the nursery. Very good collective leadership and management ensure that all staff have responsibility for maintaining the positive approaches to this area of learning.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's standards exceed expectations.
- Experienced practitioners ensure that every opportunity to promote children's mathematical development is seized.

### **Commentary**

38. The school has maintained the quality identified at the last inspection, and children of all abilities and backgrounds continue to achieve well, make good progress and reach standards above expectations in their mathematical development.
39. All aspects of the area of learning are covered fully in a lively and interesting way, with mathematical knowledge, skills and vocabulary promoted at every opportunity by skilled practitioners. Teaching and learning are very good. Mathematical activities permeate all planned sessions, with adults seizing every opportunity to develop children's understanding as they work. Thus, for example, when making model caterpillars, the teacher asks the children 'Whose is the longest?' and while planting seeds and throwing and catching balls, children are consistently encouraged to count and compare sizes and



distances. As a result, children naturally think in mathematical terms, and confidently use correct mathematical language. One child, carefully filling containers at the water tray with serious concentration, estimated with remarkable accuracy how many of the smaller were needed to fill the larger, and saw nothing strange in estimating in this way. In a very good group session, children demonstrated an extensive repertoire of counting songs, which they sang with gusto, counting confidently up and down to five, and beyond. All children are sympathetically included, and challenge is matched very closely to their abilities and level of confidence, so that all make good progress without any anxiety.

40. This area of learning is led and managed very well, as with all other areas of learning, with experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff sharing responsibility for provision and development. Very good resources are used to the maximum to provide a lively, stimulating and relevant range of mathematical activities.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Exciting and interesting activities are very effectively interlinked to make learning relevant and fun.
- All adults are adept at engaging children's interest and curiosity very well.
- Children exceed expectations in their attainment.

### Commentary

41. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world has improved since the last inspection and is above expectations. Children of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well and make good progress because of the lively and interesting range of interlinked activities provided in each session, which make learning relevant and fun. The activities capture and engage children's attention and imagination, and build on their ideas and interests very well, so that they are eager and excited to learn.
42. Very good teaching and learning support the development of children's curiosity very well. All adults are adept at encouraging children to look closely and think and talk carefully about what they are doing. Thus, while planting seeds in the garden, the adult very effectively encouraged children to consider the needs of living things as they grow. In another very good session, the adult in charge ensured children thought very carefully about the lifecycle of butterflies, as they created attractive concertina books to illustrate the lifecycle. This work was sensitively adapted to the age and ability of the children, with the younger, less able children producing fewer stages in the lifecycle. The highly imaginative use of resources, such as painted 'bubble-wrap' and cooked tapioca pudding to represent frogspawn adds a whole new dimension to tactile and visual stimulation! Children thoroughly enjoy working co-operatively on creating giant models of butterflies and stag beetles, with lively and intelligent conversation characterising the work's progress. Children were fascinated to watch woodlice and snails under the video-microscope. They competently handle keyboard and mouse when using computers.
43. The current focus on mini-beasts and butterflies means that most current activities have a scientific basis, but past planning and photographic evidence show that all aspects of this extensive area of learning are covered fully. Photographs of the visit by the fire service, and of children enjoying using chopsticks whilst celebrating Chinese New Year are just two examples. The school is very well resourced for both large and small-scale construction kits, and children thoroughly enjoy building with these to support their imaginative play.
44. As with mathematical development, shared responsibility ensures very good leadership and management.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because excellent outdoor accommodation and very good resources are used to the maximum.
- Very good teaching and learning result in children's attainment exceeding expectations.

### Commentary

45. The very good achievement and progress reported at the last inspection have been maintained, and children's physical development continues to exceed expectations. They achieve very well as a result of the extensive opportunities provided in each session, which are used to the maximum to develop children's physical co-ordination as well as their interest and excitement in learning. The excellent outdoor accommodation and very good resources give children the best possible opportunities to develop, for example, their throwing, catching and ball control skills. Children of all abilities and backgrounds equally enjoy activities and have the same extensive opportunities.
46. Teaching and learning are very good, because all adults are highly skilled at using every occasion to develop, extend and improve children's skills. Children, for example, thoroughly enjoy transporting watery mud in their wheelbarrows during creative play in the mud patch. They move very carefully, with good awareness of others, and transport this interesting medium without spilling a drop! Children pedal and control wheeled toys with considerable skill, and move with confidence and co-ordination around the roadway. In another very good session, very good teaching encouraged children to throw and catch balls, to bat with tennis rackets and to bowl hoops with increasing skill and impressive control. Children are provided with lots of opportunities for balancing, jumping and climbing, using the versatile outdoor apparatus. Assessment opportunities are built into daily routines, and all adults take part in evaluating and recording children's progress in their physical development.
47. Children also develop good fine-control skills using scissors, pencils and other tools. For example, whilst decorating the giant stag-beetle, one boy very carefully shook the glitter over the patch of glue, without the usually seen abandon and consequent waste! Children use malleable materials competently to model mini-beasts, cutting and shaping carefully, and enthusiastically discussing what they are doing with the adults at the table.
48. This area of learning benefits from the same very good leadership and management as all other aspects of the curriculum.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of the very good teaching, children learn very well, achieve very well and reach above average standards.
- The curriculum is very rich and stimulating and enhances children's imagination.
- Staff use the very good resources most effectively, especially for children to explore colour and to use their imagination in role-play activities.

## Commentary

49. Adults provide many very imaginative creative experiences in a rich and well-resourced curriculum that encourages children to achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and children's attainment exceeds expectations. This is an improvement on the position found at the last inspection. Adults pay very careful attention to stimulating children's imagination in role-play activities, dance, music, and art and design. The planned creative experiences are very well linked to the overarching theme and to the other areas of learning, especially personal and social development, language, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Adults also provide very good opportunities for children to use a good range of materials and to respond to experiences and express their ideas. Children work well together, are keen to take part in the activities and sustain their concentration very well for their ages. Teachers are very clear about what they want children to learn and use resources very imaginatively to introduce ideas. In an excellent lesson, the teacher introduced the children to different medias and materials to make a concertina book of the life cycle of a butterfly. She used different ways of representing butterfly eggs, caterpillars and butterflies, but they were set on a fixed method of making a leaf. The children were engrossed, enjoyed the session and interpreted the instructions and experimented with the resources. The product was a great success and the children rightly felt proud of their achievement.
50. There were several role-play activities both inside and outside during the inspection; a camping tent and all the equipment, a butterfly garden and many more. Adults in role-play areas extend children's learning by their skilful questioning and enticing ideas. For example, a member of staff took the children on a hunt for wood lice and other beasts after "sleeping the night in the tent". She carefully collected the equipment needed, extending the children's vocabulary and directed her team of hunters into the garden. The children then collected the bugs and used a magnifying glass to watch the creatures carefully. At other times children chose and acted out their own roles without adult assistance, as in the muddy area. In all the imaginative play situations, children are highly motivated, engaged and enthusiastic.
51. Children explore colour, texture, shape, form and space using a very good range of materials and tools. They used paper, wool, plastic materials and pasta shapes to make patterns and pictures. They make clay insects, loving the feel of clay and delicately decorating them with marks using clay tools. Children

have opportunities to make observational drawings. These are most skilful and show the engrossed interest the children took in observing bugs and pond life.

52. Leadership and management are a collective responsibility, a system that works very effectively. Resources given for children to work with are very good. Staff value the children's finished work and make really eye-catching displays for all to see.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Children's achievement	3
<b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well children learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for children	2
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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