

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 110955

Headteacher: Mr K Jones

Lead inspector: Mr Brian Holmes

Dates of inspection: 5th - 6th July 2005

Inspection number: 267887

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:	104
School address:	St Mary's Hill Chester Cheshire
Postcode:	CH1 2DW
Telephone number:	(01244) 321 274
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Hatwell
Date of previous inspection:	21 st June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Community Nursery School is in the centre of Chester. It has places for 104 children aged three and four. The children come from a wide geographic area, including the city centre, its immediate suburbs and the rural area around Chester. There are low levels of children's mobility. Most children are from a white, Christian background. There are no children whose first language is not English. The socio-economic status of the children is above the average of what would be expected in most schools. Most children enter the school with attainment which is above the average expected, although there is a range of ability represented within the group of children. The number of children with special educational needs (SEN) is low. There are three children on the SEN register, two at the school action plus stage, who have either social, emotional, behavioural difficulties or are autistic.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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13786	Susan Walsh	Lay inspector	
30395	Kath McArthur	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Mary's Community Nursery School is a **very good school** and gives very good value for money. Children achieve extremely well and achieve standards well above the levels expected for their age. The quality of teaching and learning and the levels of leadership and management are both very good and have a significant impact on children's achievements. There is also a strong emphasis on the care and personal development of all children. The school is very highly regarded by parents.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children attain standards well above those normally seen at their age and achieve very well.
- Children's attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance are all very good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good.
- The school provides a very good broad, balanced and rich curriculum.
- Support and guidance for children is excellent with very good provision for children's care, welfare, health and safety.
- There is a very good partnership with parents, the local community and local schools.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a good improvement in the school's effectiveness. The issues raised in 1999 have all been addressed well and in the use of day-to-day assessment and opportunities for staff training there has been a very good improvement. In other areas of the school's work, there has been good improvement, and in children's attendance, the guidance and welfare of children, and leadership and management, there has been a very good improvement. Under the current leadership of the school, there is a good capacity to build on achievements and improve even further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children's achievement, on the basis of the inspection findings, is **very good**. Children enter the Nursery with a range of skills, but most children enter with attainment above the level expected. Through the very good provision they receive, they make very good progress in all the areas of learning. By the end of their time in the Nursery, children's standards of attainment are well above expectations, which is a good improvement on the previous inspection. In each area of learning - personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development - standards are well above the expected level for children of this age. They are well on course to achieve the nationally agreed targets by the end of the Reception Year. In personal, social and emotional development, most children almost reach the nationally agreed target by the end of their time in the Nursery. The few children with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve extremely well.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Children have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. There is very good provision for children to become independent and to take responsibility for their own learning. Attendance and punctuality are both very good, with very good procedures for promoting both.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is very good, with excellent features. The quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. The engagement of children in stimulating activities and the use of resources are both excellent features. All teachers have high expectations of children's learning and their behaviour, and use their very good subject knowledge extremely well to plan for the children's learning. Very good use is made of non-teaching staff to support children's learning. There is very

good promotion of equal opportunities, and the needs of all children, both high ability and those with special educational needs, are well met. Assessment procedures are very good and are used extremely well to assess children's progress on a day-to-day basis, to inform planning and to set children 'next steps' targets.

The school provides its children with a very good, broad, balanced and rich curriculum. It enriches children's experiences with imaginative links across the areas of learning and very good use of visits and visitors. There is very good provision for children with special educational needs and for children's personal, social and emotional development. Accommodation and learning resources are very good and are used extremely well by staff. The guidance and support offered to children is excellent and there is very good provision for children's care, welfare, and health and safety. The school takes very good account of children's views in the learning provision it makes. There is a very strong partnership with parents, the local community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good, with very good leadership from the headteacher. He provides a very good role model to other staff and leads the school with a clear ethos and sense of direction. He has empowered other staff to successfully focus on raising standards of attainment and enabling all children to achieve their best. Governors fulfil their role and legal responsibilities well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Managerial responsibilities have been delegated very effectively and are shared by the two full-time teaching staff.

PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are very positive. Parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's provision.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant areas that the school needs to improve on.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children achieve very well and attain standards well above the expected levels for Nursery children. They make very good progress and most children are well on course to exceed the agreed targets by the end of their Reception Year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above expectations in all areas of learning.
- Speaking and listening skills are well advanced. Children use a wide range of vocabulary.
- Higher attaining children and those with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. At the meeting prior to the inspection, parents were very positive about how well their children achieve. When they start, children have a wide range of skills and experiences, and most come into the school with skills which are above the average expected for children at this age.
2. When children enter the school, assessments are made of their skills and abilities, and their progress is carefully assessed and monitored on a day-to-day basis using 'tracker sheets' and the 'Giant Strides' profiles, and over time through the 'step by step' records. This evidence shows clearly that children make very good progress over time in all the areas of learning.
3. Inspection evidence indicates that in lessons children achieve very well in all the areas of learning due to a very good quality of teaching and learning that provides a wide range of exciting activities and satisfies children's eager and inquisitive attitudes. For example, they develop very good speaking and listening skills through imaginative and creative use of role-play and most have a very wide vocabulary for children of this age. Boys and girls make similar progress in all the areas of learning. Children make very good progress when working with adults individually, or in small groups, and when they are working on activities they choose themselves. Children attain standards well above the expected level for their age. By the time they move on to their next school, the great majority of children are well on course to exceed the nationally agreed targets expected for the end of Reception class in all areas of learning.
4. Scrutiny of the work of children who have special educational needs, and observations during activities, showed that they attain good standards in all areas of learning. However, they are less confident when matching sounds to letters and calculating in mathematical activities. Their achievement is good and often very good in relation to their abilities, due to the very good provision and teaching they receive. Higher-ability children achieved well during the inspection. Planning to meet their needs is very effective in both classes.
5. The provision of specialist speech and language therapy is a strong additional feature of the school's provision and makes a very positive impact on children's progress in an area fundamental to their development in all learning areas. Staff work extremely hard to continue this support and build on the advice given. This helps those children to achieve very well in all areas of learning. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good overall.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attendance, attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's very good attitudes and behaviour help them to achieve very well.
- Children attend school very regularly.
- Relationships in school are very good.
- Children develop confidence and independence.

Commentary

6. Children rarely take time off and are able to take full advantage of the very good provision at the school. This contributes towards their very good achievement. Parents are very conscientious about sending their children to school and make a considerable effort to be punctual, despite local difficulties with parking.
7. Children really enjoy their learning. They are full of enthusiasm and join in fun activities, such as pretending to take a plane to Africa. They concentrate for much longer periods than many children of a similar age. For example, they listen carefully to stories and ask relevant and sensible questions. Children play very well together and this adds to their enjoyment of activities. As well as co-operating with role-play, they are eager to help each other learn in other situations, for example, when using the computer they offer helpful suggestions to each other. Relationships between children and staff, and with each other, are very good. This gives children the confidence to ask questions and to develop their natural curiosity. Children with special educational needs have very good attitudes and behave very well. These attributes helps them learn and achieve well.
8. Behaviour is very good. The behaviour management policy is of high quality and is consistently and fairly applied. Staff have very good behaviour management skills, and rules and boundaries are made very clear. Children are encouraged to understand why certain behaviours are not acceptable and children are disapproving of silly behaviour in others. Bullying or unkind behaviour is not tolerated and children are actively encouraged to treat others as they themselves would wish to be treated. Racial tolerance is encouraged. This results in a calm atmosphere around school where children can blossom and develop their individuality.
9. Children's personal development is very good. By the end of their time in the Nursery, most children will almost achieve the nationally agreed target for personal, social and emotional development. Their spiritual development is very good. Children are encouraged to develop empathy and to be tolerant and understanding. They are encouraged to appreciate the beauty of nature, especially through visits to a local tropical environment and a beach. Moral development is very good. Fairness, equality, politeness and consideration are stressed. Children treat each other and adults very well. They are very polite. Social development is very good. Children are encouraged to become independent. They are very keen to take responsibility, for example, tidying up or giving out drinks and snacks. Children are kind to each other; for example, they were keen to give some of their lunch to a little boy who had forgotten his lunch. Cultural development is very good. Themes include well-developed experiences from other cultures. For example, during the inspection, children were learning about Africa in some depth.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and supported by a very good broad, balanced and rich curriculum. It enriches children's experiences with imaginative links across the areas of learning and very good use of visits and visitors. There is very good provision for children with special educational needs and for children's personal, social and emotional development. Accommodation and learning resources are very good and are used extremely well by staff. The guidance and support offered to children is excellent and there is very good provision for children's care, welfare, and health and safety. The school takes very good account of children's views in the learning provision it makes. There is a very strong partnership with parents, the local community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment is very good and is used extremely well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is excellent engagement of children in stimulating and very well planned activities.
- Excellent use is made of resources to stimulate and enrich learning.
- The needs of all children are extremely well met.
- Children work extremely well independently and in small groups.
- Assessment procedures are very good and used well on a day-to-day basis.

Commentary

10. Since the previous inspection, when teaching and learning were good, there has been a good level of improvement and the quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. Staff have worked hard to improve the assessment procedures and to evaluate teaching and learning in order to improve their quality. Parents are very positive about the teaching staff.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	10	2	1	0	0	0

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

11. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together. Staff are experienced and have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They are well aware of the different needs of children. Particular strengths are the ways in which all staff engage children's interest in stimulating activities, and the use of resources, both of which are excellent. Staff carefully adapt activities to meet children's individual needs and they praise their efforts, however small the steps in learning. The excellent way staff encourage and praise the children results in very well motivated learners.
12. All teachers have high expectations of children's learning and their behaviour, and use their very good subject knowledge extremely well to plan for the children's learning. Very good use is made of non-teaching staff to support children's learning. Time is managed very well, so during each session in the Nursery, the children meet a wide range of practical activities that link all areas of learning very effectively. There is a strong focus on children acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Staff use questions extremely well to check children's understanding and to help move their learning on. In adult-led activities, children sustain high levels of interest and concentration and collaborate extremely well with other children. In child-chosen activities, adult support is generally well measured and builds well on children's interests and strengths.

13. The quality of teaching for children with special educational needs is very good because all staff are very well informed, know the children well and use the Nursery's very good assessment systems to plan and provide well-matched learning activities. The needs of higher ability children are also extremely well met through well-planned and organised activities.
14. Assessment procedures are very good and ensure that children's progress is carefully tracked and monitored. Day-to-day assessment is managed through the 'tracker sheets', and samples of children's work, which demonstrate significant progress, are retained in children's 'Giant Strides' portfolios. Assessment procedures are used extremely well to inform planning and to set children 'next steps' targets.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good and very well planned curriculum which is enriched and enhanced by a very good range of activities. It very effectively meets the needs and aptitudes of all children. The accommodation and resources that support teaching and learning are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very wide range of well-planned, interesting and practical learning activities meets the needs of the children very effectively.
- Imaginative links across the subjects make learning meaningful and enjoyable.
- A very good range of visits and visitors enriches the children's learning.
- All resources are used very well to enhance learning.
- The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs and very effectively ensures all children have equal access to all opportunities.

Commentary

15. The curriculum provides rich and exciting opportunities for the children in all six areas of learning. The teachers base their planning on the national guidance for the Foundation Stage, and the way they link the subjects imaginatively makes learning seamless and enjoyable. As a result, the children quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to achieve very well, and are very well prepared for their work in the next stage of education. Both classes follow the same themes, and the children were learning about Africa during the inspection. A very inventive range of activities included a visit to explore "the jungle" in the hothouse at Stapeley Water Gardens, counting the number of spots on leopards in numeracy, painting and drawing African animals, and singing lively action songs. The children talked enthusiastically about the African lady who visited the Nursery, and drew on a wide vocabulary when describing their experiences.
16. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good. Well-written individual education plans are securely based on very careful assessments of their learning needs and have clear measurable targets. The well-briefed teaching assistants make a strong contribution. Very good knowledge of each child and very informative assessment systems ensure the Nursery provides very effectively for children of all abilities. The provision of speech and language therapy is a particularly beneficial and important aspect of the work of the Nursery. Children who receive speech therapy are very well supported by trained assistants, enjoy working in small, targeted groups and show real improvements in their speaking and listening skills, which in turn, support their learning in all areas. Governors and staff place strong emphasis on inclusion in order to give all children equal opportunities. When children start Nursery, the staff all focus on their personal and social development to help them settle quickly. This results in happy, confident children who are ready to learn and benefit from everything they do.

17. Resources are very good overall, and are used extremely well to support all activities. The bright, spacious rooms are particularly attractive, and are well organised to provide stimulating activities in all areas of learning. The match of teachers and non-teaching staff to the Nursery's needs is very good. The small outdoor area puts some restrictions on physical activities. However, the children go outside every day for games, planned activities and to use the wheeled toys. They experience and explore challenging physical activities when part of the 'Big Room' is used for large apparatus each week. The building is kept very clean and is well maintained.

Care, guidance and support

Provision to ensure children's care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. The school provides **excellent** support and guidance. The school makes **very good** provision to involve children in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support and guidance is of excellent quality.
- The school provides a very safe, secure environment.
- Children's individual needs are met very well.

Commentary

18. The school follows locally agreed procedures relating to child protection and its measures to support children at risk and vulnerable children are very good. Procedures for health and safety are also very good. The school provides a very clean and cheerful environment where parents are confident their children are safe, secure and happy, and can learn well.
19. The school makes support and guidance its number one priority and this is reflected in the excellent provision. Staff know the children very well. Children's academic progress and personal development are very carefully monitored. Each child is treated as an individual. Difficulties, even relatively minor ones, are quickly spotted, and the school works very well with parents and external agencies to ensure that children access the care and support necessary. Induction procedures are very good. Great care is taken to ensure that these very young children quickly settle into school and develop confidence and independence.
20. Very good support for children with special educational needs is provided by knowledgeable staff who are well deployed to support children's learning through activities firmly based on the well-written individual plans. As a result, these children achieve well. There is also very good provision for the higher attaining children, who are given extra challenges to stimulate and extend their learning, for example, through mathematics challenges.
21. Although the children are very young, the school still listens carefully to their views and strives to make them feel comfortable at school. For example, the views of one child had been carefully recorded and staff had been urged to consider how the child considered their role and how that child viewed other children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are extremely pleased with the quality of provision.
- Parents find the school open and approachable.
- The school takes events into the local community.

- High quality placements are provided for students from other schools and colleges.
- There is no written report for parents.

Commentary

22. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education offered by the school. They find the school very easy to approach with problems and very helpful. They feel that they are very well informed about their children's progress and the work of the school. There are two formal parents' evenings per year, which parents find relevant and personal, and there is ample opportunity for parents to have an informal chat with staff at the beginning and end of sessions. There is no written report to parents about their children's progress but very few parents feel that this is an issue. However, the school does recognise this is an area where improvements can be made and has plans to produce an annual written report. Parents are very supportive of the school's work. There are parent helpers and a very active Friends Association has raised substantial sums of money through social events.
23. Very few children live in the immediate area around the school. However, the school takes events out into the communities where the children live. For example, social events such as the Christmas fair were held in the community. Good use is made of local facilities for visits; these are used very well to support learning. The governors have formed a committee to raise awareness of the school in the Chester area. Links with the main receiving primary schools are very good and improving. The school has particularly good links with local secondary schools, providing good quality work experience, and with colleges of further and higher education providing high quality placements for students.
24. The parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved at all stages, and links are very good due to the open, welcoming relationships between home and Nursery. Parents are consulted about their child, contribute information to and have copies of the individual plans and are always welcome to discuss their child with staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership and the leadership of other staff is very good. Management is very good. Governors fulfil their role in leading and managing the school well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership, with very good support from other staff, leads to very good achievement and high standards of attainment.
- All staff are fully committed to inclusion through an ethos where all children are valued equally.
- Staff have very good opportunities for professional development.
- Finances are managed efficiently and resources are deployed effectively for the benefit of all children in the school.
- Governors are not directly involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning.

Commentary

25. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management, which are highly regarded by staff, governors and parents. He has a very clear vision for the development of the school and enjoys the full support of the staff and governors in realising this vision. He provides a very good role model for staff and successfully promotes a strong sense of teamwork in all aspects of the school's work. There is a strong determination to achieve the highest possible standards. The commitment to ensuring that children feel valued and develop as individuals underpins the life of the school and contributes well to children's standards of attainment and achievement. There are very good relationships at all levels throughout the school, with the result that all children make very good progress and achieve extremely well.

26. The headteacher and staff successfully inspire the trust and confidence of parents. The ease with which children settle at the start of each session reflects this well. The school enjoys a very good reputation in the local community. Parents and carers highly value the very good commitment of the staff to inclusion and their very caring concern for the needs of individual children. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The knowledgeable co-ordinator is very experienced and is often asked to share her expertise with professionals beyond the school. The strong links with parents and all outside agencies are very beneficial to the children. Very good assessment systems are used very effectively to assess children's needs, monitor progress and plan learning activities. The whole staff team are very well informed and deployed to provide very good support for the children with special educational needs.
27. The headteacher leads the curriculum extremely well and managerial responsibilities are delegated very effectively between him and the other full-time teacher. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection. They work together very effectively as a team. The headteacher has put clear and effective systems in place to monitor standards and develop the curriculum. The school successfully tracks the attainment and achievement of children on a day-to-day basis and over time. A system of evaluation has been used successfully to improve teaching and learning and a more formal system of lesson observations has been planned for introduction in the near future. The school improvement plan reflects the priorities the school needs to address, and is an effective document for school improvement. It is monitored both by the staff and the governing body. Standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection. The very good progress children make in all their areas of learning reflects the school's improved provision.
28. Staff performance management is in place and focused on improvements in the quality of children's learning and the standards they achieve. The school's arrangements for the continuing professional development of staff are very good. There is a good balance between personal development and the wider development needs of the whole school. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are thorough and the school welcomes students undertaking child-related courses at further and higher education institutions, as well as work experience placements from local secondary schools.
29. The governing body fulfils its role well, and has a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. It has become statutory since the last inspection and governors have worked hard to both support and challenge the school in its development. They share the headteacher's vision for the school. Governors' expertise is used well in challenging the school to move forward. The committee system works well and governors are more directly involved in the work of the school. A governors' publicity committee works hard to publicise the school in the immediate locality and risk assessments have been reviewed. One area where governors do not fully challenge the school's performance is in teaching and learning. They are not directly involved in the monitoring programme.
30. Financial planning and management are good. The governing body has full responsibility for the school budget, which is managed well, with efficient systems in place to make sure that the finances are carefully controlled and expenditure regularly reviewed. Day-to-day administration and systems of financial control are both efficient and effective, with the school administrator working very closely with the headteacher. The carry forward from the previous financial year is slightly more than ten per cent of the budget, but this is explained by the fact that some of this money has been earmarked as a contribution towards structural repairs to the fabric of the building in the near future. The principles of best value are applied effectively. Taking into account the very good achievement of the children, the very good quality of education provision, and the very good leadership and management, set against the expenditure per pupil, the school provides very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	225,792
Total expenditure	202,491
Expenditure per pupil	2,109

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7,950
Balance carried forward to the next year	23,301

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children attend the Nursery part-time either in the morning or in the afternoon. Most children start Nursery with levels of attainment above those normally expected for their age. They make rapid progress and achieve very well in all six areas of learning due to very good teaching that provides a wide range of exciting activities, and satisfies the children's own eager inquisitive attitudes. The Nursery makes very good provision for the children who have special educational needs, and their progress is good, and often very good, in relation to their ability. By the time they move on to their next school, the great majority of children are well on course to exceed the early learning goals expected for the end of Reception class in all areas of learning.

Very good induction procedures and strong, positive links with parents ensure the children are happy to come to school and settle quickly into the Nursery routines. The staff work closely together, form a very strong, caring team and create a safe, secure and welcoming environment. The excellent way they encourage and praise the children results in very well motivated learners. All staff have a very good understanding of how children learn; the curriculum is very good, as is planning. Time is managed very well, so during each session in the Nursery, the children meet a wide range of practical activities that link all areas of learning very effectively. Very good assessment procedures ensure that children's progress is carefully tracked and monitored. Parents are welcomed into Nursery, and there are regular opportunities to meet staff either at parents' evenings or informally when they bring their children each day. The accommodation and resources are very good, with two attractive and spacious classrooms but the small outdoor area puts some restrictions on physical activities. However, the children go outside each day for games, planned activities and to use the wheeled toys.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and children's achievement are very good.
- Children enjoy learning, behave very well, and develop confidence and independence.
- Very good relationships ensure the children feel safe, secure and valued.

Commentary

31. A very good quality of teaching and learning leads to very good achievement by children in this area of learning. Staff place a very strong emphasis on personal and social development in the first term, and consequently the children flourish and show increasing maturity. The welcoming atmosphere created by the caring staff team ensures that children quickly settle into the Nursery routines and come to school eagerly because they feel secure and valued. They take great pleasure in everything they do, share equipment happily and help each other willingly. One child helped her friend count the spots on a leopard by saying "*Look, you've got two eyes and the leopard's got two spots*". Tidying up is done extremely efficiently without prompts from the staff because the children know they share responsibility for helping the whole class community. Very good relationships that are based on mutual respect, trust and lots of praise help the children become confident learners, and they interact very well with everyone in the Nursery. They show a well developed sense of right and wrong, saying "*We shouldn't laugh at someone, we should help them.*" after hearing a story about how the animals mocked an unhappy giraffe. Progress is very rapid in this area of learning, and most children have almost reached the nationally agreed targets by the end of their time in the Nursery.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good role-play activities are provided for the children to use their imagination and develop language, and support to develop speech.
- Children have very good listening skills.
- Children don't make sufficient use of the book corner in independent activities.
- Stimulating activities are provided to develop children's early writing.

Commentary

32. Children achieve very well in this area of learning because of a very good quality of teaching and learning. Standards of attainment are well above the expected level for children of this age and they are well on course to exceed the nationally agreed target before the end of the Reception Year. Children have very good speaking and listening skills developed from the wide range of role-play activities such as the Travel Agent and Simba National Park. These areas are extremely well thought-out, planned and supported by staff. As a result, most children demonstrate a wide vocabulary of words used in their correct context, '*rhinoceros*', '*hippopotamus*', '*pyramids*'. They speak in sentences that are well-constructed and thought-out. Their very good listening skills are evident through listening to stories read by staff. They show high levels of interest and concentration. They use pictures as clues to the story and discuss with the teacher what is happening and what might be happening. All children identify initial sounds, and practise reading these. Most children read their names and identify other simple words. Although books are used extremely well in planned activities, children do not make sufficient use of the book corner in independent activities. Most children write their names correctly and make very good progress in their letter formation. Children with special educational needs link sounds to letters and are mark making in their writing. Teaching shows high expectations in challenging children to identify the names of letters as well as the letter itself. Very good opportunities are provided in other activities, including role-play, for children to develop writing. In the animal safari area, they write down the names of the animals they observe after recognising the name on a label.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well due to very good teaching.
- Learning is based on a very good range of well-planned practical activities.
- Staff take every opportunity to promote mathematical understanding.

Commentary

33. The very good quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning leads to very good achievement by all children. Very well-planned activities, linked imaginatively within a theme, help children achieve very well. Skilfully constructed questions challenge and engage children of all abilities very effectively. Staff take every opportunity to promote mathematics in a practical and meaningful way, for example, matching the number of slices of apple to the number of children so everyone in the group has one at snack time, or clapping the years for birthdays. Most children count accurately and recognise the numbers up to 15, put numbers into the correct order up to 12, and many go further. They create programs to direct the Roamer floor robot across the floor and enjoy number games on the computer. The majority are well on course to exceed the nationally agreed target before the end of their time in

Reception class. Children with special educational needs count to ten and have a good understanding of shape and space.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good, which promotes the children's understanding extremely well.
- Children have a very good knowledge and understanding, gained from role-play and practical activities.
- Children learn extremely well independently, using a wide range of skills to complete their activities.

Commentary

34. Children's achievement in this area of learning is very good because of a very good quality of teaching and learning. Their standards are well above the expected level for children at this age. Most children are on course to exceed the nationally agreed target before the end of the Reception Year. Activities are extremely well organised, resourced and planned, with ample opportunity for children to learn through role-play and practical activities. Through practical activity, they learn about the effects of gravity. They have a very good general knowledge and understanding of their theme and label and identify animals that come from Africa. One higher attaining child stated confidently that *'tigers don't come from Africa.'* They learn extremely well on their own, working with another child or in small groups, where they collaborate with others and share resources extremely well. They use simple tools and techniques to put together a train track and in a construction activity to 'build a pyramid', selecting and using appropriate shapes and blocks independently. Children demonstrated good skills in controlling the mouse on the computer and operated the programs independently. They used the 'drag and drop' facility with confidence and most wrote their name using the keyboard functions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and therefore children achieve very well.
- The outdoor area is small, but this is not allowed to limit the range of physical activities provided.

Commentary

35. Children achieve very well in this area of learning through very good teaching and learning. The children use the outdoor area every day for physical activities ranging from skipping and games to wheeled toys. Each week, part of the "Big Room" is used to give the children opportunities to explore challenging physical activities such as climbing on the large apparatus. Children move safely and confidently with very good co-ordination and a sense of rhythm, which they showed when joining in with action songs during music. They handle small tools, the computer mouse, brushes and pencils with increasing control, using scissors skilfully to cut fabric for finger puppets and dexterously threading beads and rolling clay. High standards of care by all staff ensure the children are safe at all times. The children achieve standards well above those normally seen for their age.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching provides a varied range of opportunities for children to express their creative ideas, and they achieve very well.
- The Nursery is very well resourced for creative activities.

Commentary

36. The very good quality of teaching and learning provided leads to very good achievement by all children. The children were really inspired by the range of activities when the Nursery was transformed into an imaginary jungle. They enjoyed dressing up as explorers in the stockade and moved purposefully through the long grass and across the swamp on a lion hunt. They sing in tune with great enjoyment, recall the words of songs well and show a good sense of rhythm as they move to the music. The African instruments were a popular independent choice, and the children particularly enjoyed playing the drums when the African visitor came to the school. They use a wide range of media, from paint to clay, and a painting program on the computer. They accurately selected colours to paint tall giraffes, showing good control of brushes and colour to produce vivid work of a high standard. They are well on course to exceed the nationally agreed target before the end of the Reception class.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
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	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
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).

