

INSPECTION REPORT

STONEYGATE NURSERY SCHOOL

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119083

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Morrow

Lead inspector: Mrs Heather Evans

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 April 2005

Inspection number: 267999

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery with Early Excellence Centre
School category: Maintained
Age range of pupils: 1 – 5
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 98

School address: Stoneygate Walk
Preston
Lancashire
Postcode: PR1 3XU

Telephone number: 01772 257865

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Southern

Date of previous inspection: 30 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large nursery school linked to a children's centre in Preston. The school caters for 98 children between the ages of 3 and 4 on a part-time basis. Teachers also support a further 26 children who are younger than 3, who access full or part time day-care within the building. Children accessing free nursery education are not provided with school meals. There is a small kitchen in the building. The cook provides meals for 15 children over three years of age and 26 under three before and after the morning and afternoon sessions. Parents pay for this extended service. More than half of the children are from minority ethnic groups and two thirds speak a language at home other than English. The most common languages spoken are Gujarati, Panjabi and Urdu. At present there are no children attending the school who belong to traveller families. The number of children who have special educational needs is quite small but the number who are supported by a statement of special educational needs is above that usually found in a nursery. The needs of these pupils vary. Some have physical difficulties others are autistic and the rest have multiple or complex difficulties, many associated with skills in communication. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are far from affluent and the areas around the school are within those listed with high levels of deprivation. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery school is most frequently well below that usually found for children of the same age

nationally. The limited attainments are found particularly in children's personal, social and emotional development, language and communication skills, mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Stoneygate Nursery School is an outstanding school where children benefit from an extensive range of excellent learning opportunities. As a result of very detailed planning and very good teaching children of all levels of experience and prior attainment achieve very well. The school curriculum is outstanding; it is very comprehensive and meets the needs of children of all levels of attainment very well. The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership and together they manage the affairs of both the school and the early excellence centre to a very high standard. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management by the headteacher and the senior staff are excellent.
- The school's commitment to inclusion is excellent.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Children achieve very well in all of the areas of learning.
- The curriculum is excellent.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
- There is excellent provision for supporting those children from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language.
- There are excellent links with the community and the parents.
- Parents are totally supportive of what the school offers to their entire families.

Since the last inspection in 1998 the school has addressed the identified issues very successfully and has made very good improvements. The strengths identified then have been maintained and most have been improved further. The school has extended its position within the community as an Early Excellence centre. The school provides very high quality training for parents, often helping them to deal with challenging problems. Since the last inspection the school has been involved very effectively in partnership with the local sure start programme and the local education authority. The development of the Children's Centre is expected to be complete in the very near future. The governing body only received full delegated powers for the management of finance prior to the present financial year.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children achieve very well. Very good and excellent teaching enables children from a wide range of backgrounds to make a very good start to their education. Children are on course to be ready to join different reception classes when they move to primary school. From their starting point of well below the expected level on entry they are on course to achieve the expected levels for their age in all of the six areas of learning. Their communication, language and literacy skills are fostered very well in English and, for many, in their community language as well and their achievement in these skills is very good. Some of the children with special educational needs do not all attain at these levels but taking into account their complex difficulties their achievement is also very good.

Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. The school's commitment to inclusion is excellent and this underpins the superb ethos for working and learning together. The outcomes of this

commitment and practice are the excellent relationships that are apparent across the school and the very good behaviour of the children. Whilst nursery education is not statutory children attend very well and most of them arrive on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the staff of the school is excellent and is enhanced by the very good teaching that enables very good learning by all children.

An outstanding strength is the knowledge and understanding by all the staff of the needs of the children in their care and of the content and purpose of the planned curriculum. They are alert to their needs and take every opportunity to encourage independence, self-worth and personal confidence. Very effective questioning that leads children to think and reason for themselves extends learning and understanding. All of the planned activities are stimulating and enjoyable. Planning is detailed and thorough. The immaculate links across and through each of the areas of learning always lead on to the next level in the programme of steps ensuring support, consolidation and challenge. The learning intentions are always paramount and what children will do is regularly part of the decision making process for each individual. Records of what children have accomplished on a day-to-day basis are used in a superb way to assess progress and achievement and to plan the next steps in the programme for success. Teachers, key workers and other members of the support team are all involved in this intricate but manageable process. The curriculum is excellent. The accommodation is very good and the resources for learning are excellent and are maintained in an immaculate condition. The staff and governors are very vigilant in ensuring that health and safety issues are monitored very regularly.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team is excellent. The management of the staff and the facilitation of the new structures brought about during the modernisation programme is inspirational. The governing body is newly constituted and members have made an impressive start to mastering every part of their responsibilities. There is strong expertise at the core and other new members are learning their roles very quickly. The management of the transition between the early excellence centre, the children's centre and the school has been superb. The focus on staff development and the establishment of a network of complementary skills is exemplary.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Talking to children as they work and watching them as they come to each new experience shows that they are completely happy and settled in the school. Parents express very positive views about the school and about the very good start it provides for their children's education. The many who expressed views could not suggest any way that the school might be improved.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no weaknesses in the provision that the school makes for the children in its care.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning.

Children achieve very well and when they leave to go to the reception classes in other local schools most have attained the levels expected for children of the same age in all of the six areas of learning and still have three terms of learning to experience before the end of the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in all areas of learning.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well.
- Children from minority ethnic groups, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs all make very good progress.
- Children's progress in physical development is greatly improved since the last inspection.
- Children are encouraged to be independent learners.

Commentary

1. From their starting point on entry which, for most, is well below that of children of the same age nationally, children achieve very well in all areas of learning. This is as a direct result of particularly good assessment informing teachers of what individuals need to do in order to make the progress needed. The members of staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development very successfully. Teachers, key workers and teaching assistants join together to help children to build friendships and relationships as they work and play harmoniously with one another. From their first days in school the staff place great importance on developing each child as a very well motivated independent learner. As a result children demonstrate confidence in their ability to do things, they behave very well and show very mature attitudes towards the staff, one another and to learning.
2. Teachers, key workers and teaching assistants offer an excellent level of support and encouragement that enables children from minority ethnic groups to settle very well and become involved in all of the interesting activities that are on offer. Those who speak English as an additional language do very well as a result of the special support provided by multi-lingual staff who encourage them to be bold in developing their skills in listening carefully and speaking in English by readily offering simple prompts in their community language. Children with special educational needs make very good progress because of the high level of adult help they receive from knowledgeable and experienced practitioners who ensure that they are fully included in the activities of the nursery. For example, during the inspection, a child with mobility problems was helped to throw and catch a ball with her friends by the skilled support of the adult working with her. As a result her achievement in this activity matched that of the other children.
3. Every member of staff shares in promoting the programme of carefully matched activities that support the children's interests and personalities and are tailored to meet the targets set in

their individual education plans (IEPs). Every child in every group is confident that they are valued and are encouraged to give of their best, which they do. With another three terms of Foundation Stage education before the reporting stage the standards achieved and the levels attained in this nursery indicate that children from all backgrounds do as well as or even better than might normally be expected.

4. Children do very well in all of the six area of learning. Their progress is measured against the intended steps that lead towards the learning goals that they are expected to reach by the end of the reception class. Children's progress in physical development is greatly improved since the last inspection. The newly developed facilities outside are used to promote not only children's physical development but also their skills in personal development, socialisation, collaboration, mathematics and communication. Nothing is left to chance and over time all activities are planned to enable each individual child to develop a complete and well rounded personality.
5. Children achieve very well in their development of skills in communication language and literacy. They love books and like to share their favourite stories with any willing adult or with their friends. Whilst learning is predominantly in English, prompts in community languages are used in a sensible and comfortable way between friends and also by staff to explain exactly what is required. Children are encouraged to read and recognise familiar words and they do this readily. Many write or copy their names, phrases and simple sentences with good pencil control.
6. Every opportunity is taken to include opportunities for mathematical development in other activities. As a result children achieve very well and make very good progress. They make clear links and use their knowledge of number and pattern in other areas of learning. Teachers and other staff reinforce children's understanding through songs, stories and rhymes. Children are encouraged to build using large and small construction equipment to extend their experiences of size and shape throughout the day. As a result they achieve very well.
7. Children achieve very well in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They use computers to learn about the life cycles of creatures such as butterflies and explore Internet programs to look at examples from across the world.
8. Children also achieve very well in their creative development. They sing spontaneously alongside model making and within stories. Music making with instruments from many countries is a regular feature of formal teaching experiences. Alongside this musical instruments are readily available to use with tapes and headphones and boys and girls delight in singing as they play. Work in collage and painting involves choices as to the size and nature of picture making. Representations of bluebells growing showed a level of skills and maturity rare for such young children. In this group pupils' achievement was far above that most frequently found in a nursery class.
9. The way in which children from so many backgrounds and traditions are included in the nursery is excellent. All children's needs are identified early and are superbly met by the regular consultation by staff with teachers, bilingual key workers and other specialists. Children are all challenged to do their best and as a result the achievements made by children with multiple and complex special educational needs, many varied traditions and customs and a number of different first languages are all very good. Those children who do not have special educational needs achieve attainment levels that are never less than average by the time they leave the nursery

for primary school. Those who are capable of attaining higher than average levels do. Children of many diverse attributes flourish and have a start to their education that is as good as can be planned for within the system.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's behaviour is **very good**. All of the members of staff help them to develop **very good** attitudes to their learning. Their personal, social and emotional development is **very good**. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very enthusiastic about their work and about their school.
- The school's positive approach to behaviour works very effectively and results in a happy, harmonious atmosphere that promotes children's self-assurance.
- There are excellent relationships between the children and the adults who encourage and guide children in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

Commentary

10. As found during the last inspection children enjoy all of the sessions in school very much and are very eager to 'have a go' at every activity prepared for them. In fact, some really do not want to leave their colourful, exciting classrooms when their day ends. Children come into the nursery with surprising maturity, happily leaving parents or carers with their faces alight. They settle down well into the varied routines of the day. The children's confidence and self-esteem develops by leaps and bounds, because of sensitive encouragement from adults to try new things, or work with a partner.
11. Children's behaviour is very good. Children know exactly what is expected of them and because staff constantly invite their attention and interest, children do not have the time or inclination to misbehave. This is a direct result of the very high expectations of the school leadership and the consistent and affectionate way children are treated and valued.
12. The staff develop children's awareness of others and make very good provision for each individual's particular needs through role-play. They work hard encouraging very good social skills, tolerance and understanding of the needs of their playmates. The return on all this effort is seen in children's calm self control, their high concentration levels and ability to co-operate with one another in a friendly way. Overheard in the 'Post Office corner' for example was "are you sending that letter to your mum, that's nice." Another child joined in with a helpful "you will want a stamp then." It is very evident that children respect the staff and have total trust in them. This is an accolade to all the adults who work in the nursery. The parents express this view and appreciate what the nursery is doing for their children.
13. Children with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups where most of the children are learning English as an additional language settle into the nursery very quickly because of the very good support given to them and their

families. They enjoy the activities provided for them because they are very well matched to their needs and appropriate resources are provided to support their learning.

14. Affirming and enabling excellent relationships are at the core of the school's work and are seen in the way adults encourage children towards their small steps of achievement and independence. Parents confirm that their children's differences and cultures are celebrated and catered for very well in this highly inclusive school. This results in acceptance and easy friendships between children. These are most evident in the way some confidently move from one activity to the next, often hand in hand with one another or as they exchange smiles as they share learning resources. All staff are excellent role models in helping children to treat and speak to others with respect. This promotes the strong sense of racial harmony that is acknowledged and appreciated throughout the school community. Children quickly respond to signals to tidy away one set of equipment to prepare for a different activity or settle for a story.
15. Spiritual development is very good. Children are encouraged to appreciate and care for the natural world as they explore the garden for mini-beasts and engage in activities about their habitat and life cycles. They handle living creatures with care observing them using lenses and viewers. Children's moral development is promoted extremely well. They know what the nursery rules are and will explain why it is good to listen quietly and not shout. Children's social and cultural development are fostered very well with the result that sharing toys and experiences does not need to be prompted it is a natural part of both morning and afternoon activities. The diverse backgrounds that make up the nursery community enable children to learn about other cultures and traditions day by day as a natural part of growing up. Celebrating the special days from other cultures, traditions and faiths is just part of the rich experiences in this nursery.
16. Because children in the nursery are below statutory school age there are no expected norms for attendance levels. Staff make every effort to encourage good attendance and to maintain good records. There have been no exclusions in the past few years. The parents support the school's high expectations in this regard. This results in children not wanting to stay away from school even when they are ill. This was evident during a recent outbreak of chicken pox.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **outstanding**. Teaching and learning are **very good**. Curricular provision, assessment strategies and the use made of information are all **excellent**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. Children's needs are met very well as a result of the use made of the **excellent** assessment strategies.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff have very high expectations of children's personal and social skills; children work purposefully in groups or individually beside their friends.

- Excellent relationships enable the staff to build on trust to encourage children to undertake challenging tasks.
- Staff know how children learn and provide a wide range of activities and experiences to ensure very good first-hand learning opportunities.
- The focus on listening and speaking skills is very well organised and benefits all children including those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language.
- The planned links between curricular areas ensure that learning experiences are reinforced at every step by every teaching activity.
- The planned questioning by all of the staff ensures that children's thinking is challenged and their learning is monitored carefully.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	14	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;

17. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and in some lessons it is excellent. The good teaching seen at the time of the last inspection has been improved on and the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen during the last inspection has been eliminated. This indicates that the trust in the staff described by the parents is totally justified. The strength of the teaching team and the in depth knowledge of the children's needs that they share enables work to be matched to needs in an immaculate way. Teaching teams involve teachers, key workers and other support staff. They form strong teams that share a good knowledge of the children's needs and share the planned work designed to meet these needs. Each group includes at least one adult that is able to support children's community language. Planning is immaculate. It is very detailed and carefully linked to other areas of learning providing for children with learning difficulties and those capable of more complex achievements very well. The progression of the work begun in the early excellence centre is a strong reason for why children settle so quickly and do so well.
18. Excellent relationships between the staff and the children in the school and the centre enable them to encourage children to move on in progressive steps to the next level of learning. For most children these steps are small but, from time to time giant leaps are made as children suddenly understand fully what the staff are helping them to learn. These big steps to extend challenge and achievement are included in all teaching plans but staff know that for many children it is only the small steps that will be achieved on a daily basis.
19. Every member of staff demonstrates very high expectations for the development of children's personal and social skills. Activities are organised very well so that children work purposefully. This work is most frequently in groups although some of the youngest children choose to play quietly and harmoniously next to a friend. Discussion, choices and commentary about how the work is going are prompted by the staff, who are very knowledgeable about how young children learn and know and understand which activities are most likely to promote the desired learning.

20. The focus on listening and speaking skills is very well organised and benefits all children. The very careful modelling of good sentence structure is supported by necessary phrases in English or in different children's community language. These prompts involve those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups most of whom are learning English as an additional language. Some of the staff speak several languages and many children learn very well through a practical and sensible mix of English and their mother tongue. Children are managed so well that the process looks to be effortless. The harmony in each learning area is such that learning flows between activities and groups and across all rooms including the outdoor play area.
21. Every teaching activity is planned to include intended and carefully structured links between the prime purpose of the activity and natural reinforcement using other curricular areas. These integrated links ensure that learning experiences are reinforced at every step. One example was when children were building structures with large blocks and planks where they were involved in detailed discussion about shape and number. These shared and co-operative activities are built into discussions about possible ways of solving each planned challenge. Whilst most of these experiences are planned and structured all staff members take every opportunity to grasp the moment and exploit any unexpected outcomes. These spontaneous events are then recorded very briefly and later they are added to children's individual records of achievement for later review and reflection.
22. The provision for children who have special educational needs, all those from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language is excellent. The school meets the needs of all of its children very well. Staff are very patient and caring, rewarding each small but significant step with praise and encouragement. Resources are selected very carefully and used very well to move learning forward. For example, a child with hearing difficulties was observed sharing a book in her own first language with an adult who ensured she understood the story. This was achieved by paying careful attention to the illustrations and through engaging her in conversation. This support enabled the child to maintain concentration and interest right through the story. The school provides very successfully for the emotional and physical needs of all children and cares for them very well. The work of the school in partnership with the parents, the staff of the early excellence centre and the wider community is excellent. As a result for much of the time many children achieve at a rate that is better than might be expected in all aspects of their learning.
23. The record keeping and individual assessment is so thorough that the observation of achievement by any individual is used to plan each new strand of play and activity. Meticulous planning and probing questioning is undertaken by the staff at a later stage as they follow up such incidental learning. This review of records is designed to check and consolidate the individual's progress towards targets. All of the staff, teachers, key workers and teaching assistants share in individual reviews and achievements and so all work ensures that children's thinking is challenged and their path to success is supported very effectively.

The curriculum

The **excellent** curriculum meets the needs of all children enabling them to achieve very well in all areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attractive accommodation is used very well and the excellent range of resources for teaching and learning are of very good quantity and quality.
- There is a higher than average number of staff for the children on roll; the teachers and other nursery staff are experienced and well qualified for the age group with whom they work.
- The interesting and stimulating range of activities planned are very well matched to the needs of each child.
- The outstanding programmes of work for children with English as an additional language for children from minority ethnic groups and for those with special educational needs enables very good progress.
- Personal, social, health and emotional education is outstanding and includes very good opportunities for learning about other cultures and beliefs.

Commentary

24. The curriculum, which was found to be good at the last inspection, has been improved even more and is now excellent. Provision for outdoor play, which was identified as an issue at the time of the last inspection, has been fully addressed. Every part of the attractive building and space outside is now used to very good effect for the benefit of the children. There is an above average number of well-qualified and experienced staff who interact very well with the children to provide a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. Judiciously chosen, high quality resources, support these activities very well. This ensures that all children achieve very well and make good progress. As they leave the nursery children are very well prepared for additional work towards the early learning goals set nationally for the end of their first year in the primary school. The links between the work begun in the early excellence centre and the school make it easier to extend curricular experiences and to monitor progress.
25. The interesting range of activities is very carefully planned to meet both the requirements of the national curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the needs of all of the children. Lessons planned are adapted very well to meet individual needs of children of all levels of prior attainment. Higher attaining children are encouraged to do their best in all areas of learning. Children often work individually on activities or in small groups supported by an adult. This enables good concentration and frequent practise to use language in the correct context. This arrangement also ensures that any difficulties with language development are identified quickly and are met very well. This way of working also benefits those learning to speak English as an additional language as there are several bilingual speakers on the staff whose skills mean that they communicate with the children in their own language as well as in English.
26. The needs of children who have difficulties with social behaviour are met exceptionally well. These are identified early on, often prior to the child starting to attend the nursery, because of the very effective links the school has with a range of other professionals who refer children to the nursery. The school works closely with the whole family to enable parents and carers to understand how to meet their child's needs more effectively so that they can take better advantage of the curriculum.
27. The programme for personal, social, health and emotional development is outstanding and is extremely effective for all children. The school aims to foster in each child a good self-image, develop independence and a desire to learn. It promotes an understanding of hygiene routines and of healthy eating. Staff provide children with

very positive role models and help them to relate well to one another. Children and staff demonstrate great respect for, and understanding of, a wide variety of different cultures.

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support provided by the nursery school is **excellent**. Procedures to ensure a healthy and safe environment are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know each child very well as an individual. They provide excellent support and guidance for each of them.
- Support for children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is excellent.
- Health and safety checks and a satisfactory range of thoughtful assessments are regularly carried out and appropriate action follows.

Commentary

28. The very high quality of care provided for children is founded on the excellent relationships that exist between children and all members of staff. Expert teaching staff and particularly key workers, have close and personal knowledge of each child, which ensures that support, advice and everyday guidance is made relevant to their needs. This, alongside the well-ordered atmosphere helps children learn effectively and to develop well. Parents are right to be confident that their children are well looked after because they enjoy a good balance of activity with appropriate rest periods in between to recharge batteries. Throughout their time in the nursery children receive constant praise and encouragement to tackle new experiences and this builds self-esteem and supports very good achievement at every level.
29. The care and support provided for children with special educational needs is outstanding. Every child who has been identified as having special needs is helped to settle into school and is fully supported during their time in the nursery by knowledgeable and well qualified staff. Their health and safety and general well being are ensured by the school's rigorous procedures and by one-to-one adult support. Detailed and comprehensive records are maintained regarding the progress they make and this knowledge is shared with all other relevant adults. The work provided is carefully planned to ensure that children with special needs take the next appropriate steps in their learning.
30. The requirements of children from minority ethnic groups including those learning English as an additional language are fully met. Provision is linked very carefully to their individual needs. Expertise from within the school and from outside agencies is used very well to support their development and learning. Of particular note is the high number of well-trained family support workers, play therapists and other educators. All of these adults plays a vital role in smoothing the transition between home and school. A strong feature of their work is their close contact with parents, which is strengthened by home visits and support given by the bilingual staff. These professionals are pleased to talk with parents in home languages, or act as interpreters, to ensure that the process adopted is consistent and well understood by all concerned.

31. Daily routines are planned and managed very well. Agreed health and safety procedures are supported by very good documentation and well-briefed staff observe sensible precautions. Recent re-organisation and building work caused some delay to the satisfactory completion of some risk assessments. This outstanding work was completed within days of the end of the inspection and is now totally secure.
32. Welfare arrangements, including provision for first aid and child protection procedures, are very good and reflect the entire staff's commitment to children's well-being and security. These have been maintained well since the previous inspection except that now the level of support for children's learning is much better and is judged to be excellent.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are **excellent**. The well-established links with other schools are **very good**. This represents good improvements since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school keeps parents very well informed about ways to support their child's development.
- Planned provision for parents and children before they join the nursery, which includes 'Stay and Play' prepares parents and children for school.
- Strong links with the 'Surestart' initiative enriches the school's provision for adults and children and these links are central to the school's planning and children's achievement.
- Parents are highly valued as first educators and encouraged to work in partnership with the school.
- Links established with the local community make a very positive contribution to children's emotional well-being and learning.

Commentary

33. Communication with parents is excellent and is successful on many levels. There are a good number of both formal and informal channels of information. These include well-written progress reports and many other published documents. These written links, like the prospectus promote strong links because they are useful and reader-friendly. A wide range of leaflets promoting family services and health care are readily available and provide a popular and useful resource for parents.
34. The school has excellent links with parents and the early excellence centre. The excellent links established with the community are enhanced by the very high quality extended services and support programmes. The real strength lies, however, in the day-to-day informal contact that is made possible by staff being incredibly friendly and approachable. The outcome is that parents comfortably come into the nursery on a regular basis at the start or end of sessions and confidently share their worries or concerns, knowing they will be listened too and that help will be provided. They appreciate the developing role of the key workers and also the advice they receive from play therapists and nursery nurses. Many of these adults are fluent in the use of the children's community languages. As a result children from minority ethnic groups are fully included in everything that happens in the nursery as are those children who are learning English as an additional language.

35. Excellent links with local and national initiatives have been an important part of the school's planning and the children's achievement. A wide range of support for parents guides them in their children's education and are much appreciated. The wide range of staff funded by the Surestart Early Excellence Programme and managed by the headteacher are an integral part of children's development. The extended services, funded by the Early Excellence and Single Regeneration programmes, are greatly valued by parents and are making a positive difference to their lifestyles, their opportunities for work and the community at large. The excellent dialogue between the early excellence centre and the school is central, not only to excellent partnerships, but also to the school's provision for children with identified needs.
36. All evidence points to the centre and the school providing a package of services for the community that is much needed and is greatly appreciated. This allows friendships to be formed across ethnic groups and enables parental confidence to flourish. The wide range of services for parents allows them to work together happily sharing domestic experiences connected with behaviour, discipline and materialistic pressures. The support includes visits by the Fire Service, guidance on form filling and partnerships between people of various cultures.
37. Parental involvement in the life of the school is actively promoted through newsletters that also provide good tips for parents about preparing children for the range of quiet and more boisterous activities that they will experience in the nursery. High levels of satisfaction surround the loan service provided by the toy library because of the cards within the pack that show parents what to do and how to play at their child's level. Parents are thrilled that they have these opportunities to work with the school to help their child achieve the best possible start. Help doesn't stop there because adult learning is fostered very well through a range of relevant courses, which some parents use as a springboard to further study or employment. Others report that the new skills they learn make it easier to manage their children's behaviour at home.
38. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in all decisions about their children's education. They see all letters and reports from the professionals involved in their own child's care and education. These are written in clear, easy to understand English and translators are available if needed. As a result of the outstanding courses provided for parents and the exceptionally high quality of play therapy for children and their carers, social, emotional and behaviour difficulties are often corrected prior to children starting mainstream school at five. This helps the children to take better advantage of the education provided.
39. Good use is made of local organisations such as art or theatre groups to enhance children's personal development and regular visits are made to nearby shops to enliven learning. Regular liaison with the Preston Job Centre supports parents' access to information about available benefits and employment prospects.
40. Very effective links with receiving primary schools smooth transfer arrangements and the nursery is within a local cluster of schools whose staff meet to share ideas or training. Many parents use school facilities regularly for the popular play and stay sessions. The school promotes access to a range of extended services in direct response to the complex needs of the community it serves. Parents' only complaint about the nursery is that it is closed at the weekend.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team are **excellent**. The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has excellent vision and aspirations for all aspects of the school's development and these are reflected in the very high levels of achievement of all children.
- The leadership and management by senior staff are excellent.
- The governors are very supportive of the work of the school.
- All aspects of strategic planning are very good and have contributed to the very high levels of improvement in standards and all aspects of provision since the last inspection.
- The school's assessment, monitoring and tracking systems and their use are exemplary.
- The financial planning and best value principles are very effective in all aspects.
- The deployment of the exceedingly wide range of staff is excellent and contributes to very high levels of achievement by all children.

Commentary

41. The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership and management. There is an excellent and shared commitment to raising standards and providing an enriching education for all children. All staff work diligently to implement the school's vision of providing an inclusive and wide-ranging curriculum with tremendous success. There has been very good and sustained improvement in this aspect of the school since the last inspection.
42. The overall leadership of the school is excellent; the headteacher provides excellent educational direction. The staff and the governing body share the clear commitment of the headteacher to the principles that drive the school forward. The headteacher and senior management team support and motivate each other very effectively. They use the wide range of highly skilled support staff to the best possible effect. This contributes very well to the very high levels of achievement made by children who have diverse, multiple and complex learning needs. The provision for children with special educational needs is superb. All initiatives are kept on course through rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation. The monitoring process is shared by all of the people involved in the project across the community. The detailed review and evaluation of work is shared by all. Initiatives are tracked meticulously and are not allowed to drift. The teaching staff ensure that the agreed strategies of teaching and learning are followed through. An excellent supportive network exists throughout the school. Everyone is valued very highly and is given as much help as possible. In this way the staff and governors are able to measure the successes in both personal and professional development as well as in the well-documented achievement records of the children.
43. Excellent management ensures that clear goals are set for everyone. The headteacher has exceedingly high expectations of herself, all of the members of staff and the children. All adults' roles and responsibilities are very clearly written and understood. The superb management is reflected in the apparently effortless ways in which children move from one area of learning to another. Additional support is highly

purposeful yet understated. The clear detailed objectives are fully achieved by the end of the day. All staff ensure that the skills of each area of learning are acquired within the context of creative application and enjoyment. They have been very successful in raising standards in all areas of learning since the last inspection and the school has been continuing through a programme of building and renewal for many months. The excellent use of a wide range of assessment data contributes to the now rapid improvement. All staff fully understand their areas of responsibility and provide excellent support for colleagues and children.

44. The school is governed well. During the inspection a significant number of recently appointed governors came to express their support and demonstrate their personal involvement. The more established members of the governing body support these new governors very well. They have begun a programme of training and more is already planned for them. All governors have a clear awareness of their role in supporting the school and in monitoring its effectiveness. While recognising the importance of high levels of achievement, they place an equally strong emphasis on children's personal development. Across the school there is an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding, challenge and very high expectations. The headteacher and deputy headteacher who are both governors, provide excellent guidance for the most recently appointed governors.
45. The leadership and management of special educational needs is excellent. The co-ordinator is extremely knowledgeable and an outstanding range of services are provided for both children with special educational needs and for their parents. The school is constantly seeking to improve.
46. Performance management systems are exceptional and are linked to whole school targets and children's identified needs. They provide a superb method of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. This in turn leads to well matched and excellent professional development. The regular yet understated monitoring contributes to the effectiveness of all staff. This is supplemented by excellent guidance and exceptionally well planned in-service training. The excellent range of information is read by and discussed with supply staff including those from the supply agencies before they begin to work alongside children. In this way, the excellent leadership and management ensures that, even with absences, the outstanding level of provision is maintained. Excellent use is made of the wide range of support provided through different national and local initiatives. These programmes have enable the school to provide play therapists and speech therapists. This is part of the very good support given for parents and children through the linked children's centre before many of them start school and contributes to the excellent provision.
47. The excellent level of administrative support is highly professional and very efficient. Office procedures are streamlined and are very effective. The members of the administrative staff provide a very warm and welcoming first point of contact for all parents and visitors. Their understanding of all aspects of school management, financial procedures and the many legal requirements ensures that the headteacher and senior staff are able to focus their attention on educational issues. The office is extremely well organised and is an attractive feature of the school.
48. The school deals exceptionally well with any identified aids and barriers to achievement. At the heart of management is an excellent self evaluation system based on a total commitment to the analysis of the needs and progress of young children. This begins with very effective use of information gained before children first

start school. In this way, the school is very successful in compensating for the below average levels of language and learning skills on entry. It has been less than a year since the school took control of its finances and the up-to-date reconciliation figures for the end of the financial year were not available at the time of the inspection. The school maintains very good accounts and makes very good use of specific funding. This includes the costs of therapists, special educational needs and support for children learning English as an additional language.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING.

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children make a flying start to their learning in the Nursery because of excellent provision overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. As a result of the very good teaching across all areas of learning, children are very well prepared for transfer to the reception classes in a wide selection of local primary schools. Children attend the nursery part-time for either the morning or afternoon session. There is one nursery class that makes excellent provision for all six areas of learning. Staffing levels are high in order to meet the wide range of learning needs, children from minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs. A high proportion speak English as an additional language. On entry to the nursery attainment overall is well below what is normally expected for children of the same age nationally.

The recently completed area for outdoor play and learning is used very effectively. This excellent provision is very well resourced and is used regularly each day. Children demonstrate a clear purpose and abundant enjoyment in their learning. The excellent planning ensures that children have many opportunities for investigating and for communicating with adults as well as with their friends. All children are very well motivated and their learning is focussed yet fun.

There is a sincere commitment to the inclusion of everyone and to the development of all aspects of children's learning in an attractive and safe environment where children enjoy learning. The headteacher has an excellent commitment to children's enjoyment and learning. The excellent provision has resulted in the school gaining a wide range of awards including the Basic Skills Awards and it is working towards gaining the Healthy Schools Award.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent range of planned activities and resources increase children's independence and their ability to work in groups.
- Very good teamwork ensures that all children achieve very well.
- Children make very good progress throughout the year.
- Teachers plan an exceptionally enriching range of special events that contribute to children's very good understanding of Christianity and of the cultures, faiths and customs of people in multi-faith Britain.
- Teachers and teaching assistants support all children very well and help them to develop high levels of self-confidence.

Commentary

48. All staff work as a very cohesive and effective team and children are introduced sensitively but thoroughly to classroom routines and working in groups. Staff work in well-organised teams and they know the children very well and plan activities, which interest them and ensure that they achieve very well. Children are encouraged to become independent learners making and explaining choices about their work. They

take time to talk to them and use praise very effectively to raise children's self-esteem. They give sensitive reminders about behaviour. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Teachers, the nursery nurse and teaching assistants set very good examples to children. This is an excellent aspect of the provision as children of all abilities make very good progress and develop very well socially as well as academically. During these activities all adults ensure that children are purposefully involved. They use these opportunities for excellent monitoring of attainment, achievement, attitudes and behaviour.

49. From the calendar of celebrations and special events children share in many celebrations from a wide range of cultures and religions. They are very well prepared for life in multi-cultural and multi-faith Britain. Children work and play together very well showing high levels of self-worth and demonstrating very good self-esteem. As a result of this provision and experiences children attain standards in this area of learning that are well above those expected for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of children's speaking and listening skills are very well promoted through all areas of learning.
- The curricular planning, assessment systems and use of assessments to guide planning are excellent.
- Opportunities for role-play and writing are promoted very well.
- Children take reading books home and teachers help parents to read with their children at home.

Commentary

50. Children's attainment in speaking and listening by the time children leave the nursery is in line with those expected for their age and experience. This represents very good achievement because when children join the nursery many of them have very limited skills in language and communication. In addition, many of the children with special educational needs who have additional support from the local authority and attend school have significant and additional learning needs in this area of learning. The headteacher and staff place great emphasis on the importance of speaking and listening and all activities are planned with this in mind. All staff have excellent detailed knowledge of this area of learning and use many strategies including extensive and probing questioning skills to encourage children to think, listen carefully and speak clearly. Highly effective teaching is provided, for example, on a one-to-one basis for children who have multiple or complex learning needs as well as for those who speak English as an additional language. As a result of the excellent levels of expertise, learning is purposeful and fun and children make very good progress. Those children capable of higher-attainment are enabled to reach standards that are above those expected but understandably some with additional needs do not reach all of the expected levels.
51. Most children quickly adapt to the routines and exciting activities in the nursery. They listen to and participate in a wealth of stories and songs. Most children speak with confidence, listen carefully and are very enthusiastic learners. Children are accomplished mark makers and write with pens, pencils and crayons to record their

telephone calls, write their shopping lists, take orders from a menu or to record the work undertaken in the classroom office. Most children recognise their own names and those of their friends. Older children write their own names independently whilst others copy words and phrases with good control of their pens and pencils.

52. Children have many opportunities to share books and stories with their friends and the staff of the nursery. They compare pictures in books with the creatures they are viewing in the models of mini-beasts and the living insects in the observation tank. Many of the available books are in dual languages and teachers and other staff discuss the differences in writing patterns. Most children take reading books home each week and teachers help parents to find out about enjoyable ways to read with their children at home. When looking at caterpillars and butterflies on an Internet link one child ran to find the book about the very hungry caterpillar. This book became the centre of a shared reading and discussion session later on as had actually been planned.
53. The headteacher and staff are committed to ensuring that all children achieve very well in English and develop their learning in a progressive manner. Their abilities in their home languages are used as a springboard for success and, as a direct result of a rich yet structured curriculum, children achieve very well. Very good relationships give children the confidence to speak and all adults listen and respond to their comments. The teachers have developed very rigorous and tightly structured plans for the teaching of sounds. Standards show very high levels of improvement when compared to their attainment on entry to the class.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching.
- Teachers plan an exciting range of activities that ensures that children understand numbers and apply their skills to other areas of learning.
- Children have very positive attitudes and apply mathematical skills with confidence.

Commentary

54. Children achieve very well due to very good teaching and excellent assessment procedures that are used to influence the next stage of planning. Most children are very well placed to achieve the expected levels by the end of the year and higher-attaining children already exceed them. Children's knowledge and understanding are very good in all aspects of number, shape and space and problem solving. In most cases their understanding of 'squares', 'circles' and 'triangles' is very secure. When playing with three-dimensional shapes they relate them well to the plane shapes that they know. All teachers have very high expectations and successfully develop children's confidence and make learning exciting and relevant to them.
55. Children count and recognise groups of objects up to 5 readily. Many are skilled beyond six and count accurately up to ten or twenty and recite or say many very big numbers. They explain how many objects, chairs or stamps they can see. Their understanding of 'a few' or 'a lot' is developing very well and they know when there are enough knives or forks to match the plates set out at the table. Jigsaws with

numerals are particular favourites and many children readily find the correct numeral to verbal prompts.

56. Children apply mathematics to most areas of learning; they are encouraged to look for patterns and shape in construction activities, art and design and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children use the good supply of computers very well and ICT is very successfully incorporated into this area of learning to develop children's understanding of colour, shape and number. Children sing and recite many number rhymes that involve them in adding or taking away one from a known number of items. Very effective class activities at the end of the lessons give children opportunities to demonstrate their new learning and also consolidate mathematical skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world was good at the time of the last inspection and is now **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An exciting range of activities is provided covering a wide number of topics.
- The accommodation both inside and out are used very well to support and enhance this area of learning.
- Very good attention is paid to learning about the local community.

Commentary

57. By the time they leave the nursery to start in their different reception classes, most children are on course to reach the expected attainment levels. The active and practical nature of the activities provided, coupled with very good levels of adult involvement in children's play, ensure that all children, including those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well. From well below average levels of knowledge and understanding on entry to nursery, all children make very good progress and concentrate for long periods because they are engrossed in the activities provided. The range of activities provided is very appropriate to the age and interests of the children and the accommodation is used particularly well. One classroom is devoted almost entirely to support this area of learning and is set up with an excellent range of resources including wet and dry sand, water, construction toys and small world play. This area of learning is also supported by carefully planned use of the nursery garden.
58. After the children had been on a 'creature hunt' in the nursery garden, members of staff set up interactive display of 'minibeasts'. Skills learned in reading, writing and mathematics are used well to support this area of learning. The children's interest in insects and small creatures was reinforced by the active involvement of staff who share factual books with the children and help them to develop the appropriate scientific vocabulary and encourage them to count legs and to name and label the creatures and parts of their bodies. Computers are also used very well to reinforce learning. The children use the computers and interactive whiteboards very competently.
59. An excellent lesson took place in the garden where the children were encouraged to look and listen to the sights and sounds of nature. The teacher ensured that the

children's experiences were reinforced with appropriate language. The children's facial expressions were full of wonder and delight when their quiet stillness while listening to bird song was rewarded by a bird swooping down near them and then soaring off into the sky.

60. Sometimes visitors come to school to support the lessons planned. One such visitor came with a 'Creepy crawly road show' that included a variety of creatures including snakes and large spiders. This further stimulated the children's interest in nature and as a result some high quality paintings and drawings were produced.
61. Children also learn about the local community. Sometimes they are taken in small groups to the shops. The families who use the nursery help children celebrate the festivals that are important to them. Children regularly use the main languages spoken in the community and see community languages written on the labels and notices around the school. They have a range of books depicting familiar stories written in other languages and often hear them read by bi-lingual staff. All these things help the children to learn about the rich and varied environment in which they live.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery benefit from excellent outdoor provision and resources.
- Children enjoy all the activities planned for them; they work very well together and share equipment readily.
- All staff are consistently vigilant in order to ensure safety of all children.

Commentary

62. Provision in this area of learning has greatly improved since the last inspection. Most of the children are on course to reach the levels expected by the time they leave the nursery; a few of the higher-attaining children in the group already exceed them. During the inspection children in the nursery showed very high levels of co-ordination when they used the wide variety of wheeled equipment in the very attractive outdoor area. The available equipment is readily accessible and is of high quality. It enables children to develop their skills of riding, climbing, jumping, and keeping their balance. With the support of the skilled staff and their careful planning the equipment and learning opportunities help children to play with and alongside others very well.
63. Children with specific physical needs enjoy the opportunity to ride on specially adapted equipment. All children are included very well in all activities; higher-attaining children have extra challenges and those with special educational needs benefit from very good support in all activities. These activities contribute very well to children's personal and social development.
64. Children handle construction equipment, paintbrushes, scissors and pencils with very high levels of dexterity and accuracy. During the inspection children copied shapes accurately and their paintings and drawings of bluebells were outstanding. This work showed very good ability to concentrate and observe details as well as an awareness of shape, proportion and use of colour. Teachers have very high expectations of all children. The younger children and those with special educational needs or those who

are still rather timid benefit from very good support and encouragement and they all achieve very well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of exciting activities in all aspects of this area of learning.
- Children use an exciting range of media and develop confidence, imagination and many artistic skills in the use of colour, texture and shape.
- Children have many opportunities for singing and playing musical instruments.
- The recently developed outdoor provision is very attractive and gives children many opportunities for learning.

Commentary

65. Most children are on course to reach the expected level before they move on to primary school in September. A few children who are capable of higher attainment are already at a level close to the early learning goal. Children gain confidence in using an increasingly wide range of resources because of very good teaching and excellent curricular planning. They use a wide variety of materials to create pictures and models demonstrating a good feel for texture and shape. Children develop speaking and listening skills very well as they discuss the materials used and compare designs. During both the carefully planned and more informal music activities children sing a good range of songs tunefully and enthusiastically. They play a wide range of percussion instruments with great enjoyment and with accurate rhythm.
66. Lessons observed, the displays of work and discussions with individuals and small groups, show how well children are developing in this area of the curriculum. Records of achievement and shared planning files show that over the year children have an excellent range of creative opportunities. They experiment when mixing paint and using modelling materials. A particular strength is their very good awareness of shape and texture in art. All staff encourage children to make decisions about what materials they will use and they support their choices even when they seem at first to be unusual. When making samosas, chapattis or biscuits children are encouraged to explain what they are doing and how and when they might eat the prepared food whether it is imaginative play with dough or real food preparation. Children are encouraged to speak clearly in sentences and to use their imagination in a wide range of activities including role-play in the dressing up corner.
67. The recently developed outdoor provision is very attractive and gives children many additional opportunities for learning. The quiet reflective area is used to provide a focus for children who have no gardens at home to consider how flowers grow and the pattern and shape of leaves and petals.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	1
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	8
Attitudes	1
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	1
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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