

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE FIELDS EARLY YEARS CENTRE

Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridge

Unique reference number: 110593

Headteacher: Mrs G October

Lead inspector: Mrs S Vale

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 268053

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: Early Years Centre  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 4  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 89

School address: Galfrid Road  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
Postcode: CB5 8ND

Telephone number: (01223) 518 333

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Bernard Miller

Date of previous inspection: March 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Fields Early Years Centre in Cambridge opened on a new site in September 2003 in newly-refurbished and extended accommodation in the grounds of Abbey Meadows Primary School. It provides full day care facilities linked to Nursery provision for children aged 3 months to 4 years. There are 89 children currently attending the Nursery on a part-time basis. Thirteen children are learning English as an additional language; this is high when compared to other nurseries. Of the 19 children identified as having special educational needs, none have a statement of need. The centre serves an area of social need and is involved in the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. Its catchment is largely social housing within the Sure Start area, with some admissions from the surrounding area. It became a designated Children's Centre in December 2004, the first in the county. It has recently received EEL<sup>1</sup> accreditation with Investors in Children in April 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> EEL – Effective Early Learning Project.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22476	Mrs S Vale	Lead inspector	Creative development Physical development
31758	Mr E Tipper	Lay inspector	
3574	Dr K Singh	Team inspector	Communication language and literacy Knowledge and understanding Personal, social and emotional development English as an additional language
22113	Ms A King	Team inspector	Mathematical development Special educational needs

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**The Fields is an effective Nursery and children's centre, in which children and their families come first.** The good teaching and very strong provision for personal development mean that children settle quickly and develop very good attitudes to learning. This, along with effective leadership and management, very close links with parents and the community, ensure that children achieve well. Many Children start with attainment well below expectations for children of this age. The Centre provides good value for money.

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

- Clear vision by the headteacher for the development of the Centre ensures that there is a stimulating and enriched curriculum which enhances children's learning.
- Teaching is good; children are very well cared for and learn in a safe environment, and, as a result, they become independent learners and achieve well.
- Children's attitudes to learning are very good.
- Provision for personal and academic guidance is very good and for children with special educational needs is good.
- Very good links with parents and the local community are supported by a wide range of services available for children and their families.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The Nursery has identified the need to focus on the development of children's mathematical skills and this is appropriate.

This is The Fields Early Years Centre's first inspection as a children's centre. It was previously inspected on a different site as Dittons Fields Nursery.

There has been good progress made in addressing the key issues since the last inspection. There are improved arrangements for registration at each session, and absence is more closely monitored. However, during one afternoon session at the time of the inspection, only nineteen out of thirty two children were in attendance. The Nursery was aware of why these children were absent and attendance is encouraged. The aims of the Nursery have been reviewed and statutory requirements are now met. Governors have undertaken a lot of training since the previous inspection and are more aware of their role. This results in the governing body having a clearer picture of the development of the Centre.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

Overall, children achieve well. From a below average starting point, by the end of Nursery children are well on their way towards meeting the Early Learning Goals in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. If they continue to achieve as well as they are, by the age of five, they are likely to exceed the goals in physical development and in personal, emotional and social development. The majority of children are working below levels expected for this age in speaking, reading, writing and calculation skills.

**Children's' personal qualities are developed very well.** Children have very good attitudes to learning, promoted by a positive ethos, and they behave well. They quickly become independent, well-motivated learners. Almost all children sustain high levels of concentration for their age. On the whole, they are friendly and welcoming, and are often

willing to help each other out. Attendance and punctuality overall are satisfactory. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The care and welfare of children are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall.** The staff work well together as a team. The quickly established routines create a purposeful learning environment where very good resources are readily available. The teaching successfully promotes equality of opportunity. Very good assessment procedures support children's learning by showing areas that need further development and teachers plan work carefully to support and extend the next stage of children's learning. The curriculum offers very good enrichment and gives children a good opportunity to experience a wide range of practical hands-on activities. This promotes their enthusiasm and desire to find out more and to learn. The Centre's partnership with parents and the community is very good. There are good links with other schools and nurseries through the local Nursery network. The centre has joined with five other nursery schools to become a Primary Learning Network to research and report findings about children's early mathematical calculations. This is still in the very early stages of development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The Nursery is effectively led and managed.** The headteacher provides very good leadership. The daily management of the Centre is efficient. The detailed school development plan reflects a strong team ethos to move the Centre forward. Good teamwork shows that staff are supportive of the headteacher's leadership. The Nursery, through the involvement with the Effective Early Learning project, regularly reviews their work in order to see where improvements are needed. An appropriately high level of training is given to the development of teachers and support staff and this is closely linked to areas of development in the Centre's improvement plan. The governors are aware of the strengths and the weaknesses of the Centre and support it well. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

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

The parents are very pleased with the education that their children receive. They are particularly pleased with the ethos of the Nursery, which they feel is very welcoming. A number of parents and families use the extended facilities the Centre offers such as, the breakfast club, music therapy and drop-in activities. Teachers regularly talk to children about their views of the Nursery and act upon the children's own interests.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**In order to raise standards further, the Centre should:**

- Continue with the Nursery's priority to improve children's skills in mathematical calculations.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

By the time children leave Nursery they are well on their way to meeting the Early Learning Goals in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal, social and emotional development and physical development if children continue achieving as well as they are in these areas they are on target to exceed the expectations of the early learning goals. Although good progress is made, the majority are unlikely to meet the early learning goals in mathematical development, reading and writing.

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

- The strong focus on personal development ensures that all children achieve well in this aspect and reach good standards.
- Children reach good standards and achieve very well in physical development.
- Children with special educational needs achieve well.
- Encouraging children's independent learning enables them to achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

1. When many children enter Nursery their performance is well below what is expected for their age. By the end of Nursery, they are well on their way to meeting the Early Learning Goals in creative development, and in knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal, social and emotional development and physical development, if children continue achieving as well as they are in these areas they are on target to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.
2. Children do particularly well in personal, social and emotional areas of their learning. They are helped to settle quickly and their behaviour is managed well. The way the curriculum is planned encourages children to become independent learners. This helps them to make at least good progress in all areas of learning. Many start Nursery with levels well below what is expected at this age. This means that although they achieve well and make good progress, they have a lot of ground to make up and the majority reach standards below what is expected for children of this age in mathematical development and in speaking, reading and writing.



3. Children with special educational needs are well provided for and achieve as well as their peers. A significant number of children need extra support in developing their speech. They receive good additional support from speech therapists and speech and language assistants. Teachers know the children very well and they receive very good support from Nursery nurses and teaching assistants; this helps children to achieve well. The few children who speak English as an additional language make good progress and also achieve well. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.

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

Children's behaviour is good and they demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The Centre sets high standards of behaviour that most children meet.
- Children are very enthusiastic in their approach to everything they do.
- Children's personal development is very well provided for.
- More needs to be done to convince parents of the importance of regular attendance.

### **Commentary**

4. All members of staff reinforce the high expectations for the behaviour of the children by constant reminders of what is expected of them. Most respond very positively to this and are able to work and play with each other in a friendly and co-operative way. On occasions, however, there is some disruptive behaviour and a few children have to be regularly reminded how to behave.
5. The children are very responsive to their teaching and keen to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. They were seen to be particularly enthusiastic and inquisitive when introduced to a live rabbit and African snails. They are beginning to work on their own initiative, as shown in the way they took responsibility for bringing in all the toys when it started to rain. Whilst the self-esteem of several children is fairly low, many are very confident in the way they approach and talk to visitors.
6. The example set by adults in the Centre ensures children develop a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong. They also learn very good social skills. At lunchtime, they eat in a calm manner and chat quietly to each other and adults. Most have also learnt the importance of sharing and taking turns. The emphasis placed on investigating the natural world, such as through seeing and touching live animals and working in the garden, contributes well to children's spiritual development. They are introduced to their own and others' cultures through the celebration of different festivals. This is often done through the medium of food, such as cooking a Chinese meal to celebrate the Chinese New Year and baking bread for Harvest Festival.

7. The arrangements for registration have improved since the last inspection and follow-up action is taken when children are absent without informing the school. Reasons for absence are not recorded in the registers, however, making analysis of them difficult. A number of parents do not ensure their children consistently attend. For example, on the first afternoon of the inspection, 13 of the 32 in the Nursery were absent.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE CENTRE

**The quality of education is good overall, with some very good features. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Curriculum provision is very good.** The high levels of care and very good partnership with parents make a significant contribution to the children's development as independent learners.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is very good in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-established routines and well-organised activities ensure that children settle quickly to their learning.
- Good, well-timed, adult intervention from all staff, including good questioning, elicits the most from children and helps them to achieve well.
- Assessment procedures are very good and used very well to plan the next stage of children's learning.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 sessions*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	13	0	0	0	0

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

8. Staff work well together as a team. Routines are quickly established and children new to Nursery settle quickly. Children are happy and eager to learn and experience new things. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The indoor and outdoor areas are well organised to allow a free flow of activities between the two areas, enabling children to learn through their own interests and to initiate their own imaginative ideas. This helps them to develop in confidence and they become independent learners. They learn to play well alongside each other.
9. Teaching is consistently good. The wide range of activities are stimulating and enthuse children's learning. The curriculum gives children first-hand practical experiences. For example, in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world, they are encouraged to search for insects in the garden, and to explore the world around them. Children are encouraged to talk about what they find and see and to ask questions. Teachers give clear explanations about what children find and are always ready to answer their questions.

10. Very good teaching is seen when specifically targeting children's personal, social and emotional development. All adults working with the children encourage them to become independent learners. This is seen particularly from the very good support by the teaching assistants. Activities are well planned so that resources are readily available for children to retrieve themselves. This allows children to follow through their own independent ideas and to develop their imaginative skills thoroughly.
11. Assessment procedures are very good. All adults are involved in making observations about what children know, can do and understand. These observations are transferred to their individual foundation stage profiles, so that a whole picture of individual children's strengths and areas for development are built up. Children's records of achievement (special books) are presented well and include many pictures of the activities and skills which they achieve. This is a thorough and simple way of allowing parents and all who work with the children to see their progress.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provided by the school is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are used very well to provide stimulating activities that help children to achieve well.
- The curriculum supports children's independent learning skills.
- The Nursery's priority to improve children's skills in mathematical calculations is appropriate.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good.

## **Commentary**

12. The curriculum is well planned and provides a rich and balanced basis for learning. It is relevant to individual needs and prepares children well for the next stage of their education. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements. The curricular provision, including enrichment through visits and visitors and use of accommodation and resources, has improved from good to very good. The good leadership and management of the school have had a strong influence on these improvements.
13. All areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are taught in each session. A free-flow use of both outdoor and indoor areas, successfully promote skills in more than one area of learning. Wide ranges of stimulating activities are planned around several themes, which have relevance and meaning for children. This encourages children to 'want to work' and they become independent learners. The study of mini-beasts triggers many activities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Opportunities to observe work on a nearby building site and a visit from a beekeeper aroused children's curiosity about the world around them.
14. The very good emphasis throughout the Nursery on children's personal, social and emotional development promotes high achievement. Early literacy skills are developed well. Physical skills are very well fostered indoors and outside. Work with

computers and with the interactive whiteboard adds interest for children, who achieve very well. Mathematical skills are promoted well, but there is a need for more resources and time to be given to this area of learning to ensure all opportunities are used to extend learning, particularly in mathematical calculations.

15. Careful routines are established. The 'key worker' system, whereby a member of staff works closely with, and monitors the learning of a small group of children, is effective in meeting individual needs. Assessment systems are very well implemented to track children's progress and are well used to improve the curriculum. It is rigorously monitored and evaluated and any gaps in any area of learning are judiciously filled.
16. A breakfast club and an after-school club provide other experiences for full-time children to relax and enjoy the activities. Arising from the school's recognition of the importance of the parents' role in children's development, several other innovative projects to support families are having a positive impact on children's learning. For example, Family Play sessions in the summer holidays provided fun activities for parents and children.
17. The school has an effective team of teachers and very good teaching assistants and Nursery nurses who are well-trained and knowledgeable about how young children learn. The high number of support staff ensures that all children are included and participate fully in all aspects of the curriculum. Staff who have specific expertise, such as supporting children with speech difficulties or teaching the use of the interactive whiteboard are very well used and this early intervention supports children's learning very well.

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

The school makes very good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of its children and provides them with a very high level of support, advice and guidance. It actively takes account of their views when organising the school day.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop very trusting relationships with adults within the school.
- Pupils are very well cared for in a safe and healthy environment.
- The Centre actively promotes healthy living.
- Children are successfully involved in influencing the daily life of the school.

### **Commentary**

18. The Centre is a very caring place where children receive constant personal support from the network of teaching, Nursery and childcare staff. The key worker system is highly effective in ensuring that every child has a very trusting relationship with one adult who is constantly on-hand to provide support. The level of academic guidance is both timely and applicable, reflecting the good processes for assessing children's progress. The headteacher greets all the children, and their parents or carers, on their arrival in school and the teachers and support staff welcome each one individually at the start of a session and ensure they are settled in quickly. Parents and their children are very appreciative of the Centre's efforts in these areas.

19. The health and safety of the children is a major priority for the centre which has very good procedures in place. Members of the health and safety committee tour the site twice a term and produce an action plan to address any hazards identified. Risk assessments are produced for school activities, such as using the outside play equipment, and outside trips. The headteacher and senior teacher have been fully trained in child protection and they administer an effective system. All staff members received in-school training this year and newcomers are fully briefed as part of their induction. The childcare staff, who have recently received first aid training, support the fully-trained first-aider in dealing with any injuries. Records are kept of all such instances and parents are informed the same day. There is an appropriate system to ensure the security of the children.
20. The centre is very keen to ensure its children develop a healthy lifestyle. In reflection of this, it achieved accreditation as a health promoting school. It also belongs to the 'fruit in school' scheme, which provides the children with fresh fruit and vegetables for their morning snack, and provides water and milk for them to drink. A working party, made up of staff and parents, discusses relevant issues and a booklet ('looking after yourself') has been produced to help parents provide a balanced diet.
21. Children's views are actively sought on their likes and dislikes in school through mini-surveys, the results of which are recorded and used to influence planning of their learning experiences. Their opinions are also sought and valued as a matter of course on a daily basis.

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

The centre has developed very good relationships with parents and the wider community. It has good links with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to their children's learning and personal development.
- A very good range of links with the local community broadens children's experiences.
- Parents are provided with a high standard of information about the Centre and its activities.
- Links with other schools are of clear benefit to the children's development.

### **Commentary**

22. The Centre provides parents with a wide range of family support and drop-in facilities that help them to become involved in their children's education. Sessions are run every morning and afternoon and include activities such as music therapy, infant massage, parenting and a toy library. There are close relationships with the outside agencies, such as Sure Start, who finance the running of these sessions, which are well supported by parents who value them highly. Parents are encouraged to come into school and help where possible. Several have talked to the children about their jobs or shared aspects of their cultures with them. The Friends Association is an active fundraiser and was instrumental in gaining a grant to develop a wildlife area that was created by a working party of parents and friends.

23. The Centre has a number of visitors to the school who come in to talk about their jobs, who bring in a variety of pets and other creatures and they make a significant contribution to children's education, by stimulating their imagination and broadening their experience. A particularly unique example of this was a visit by two beekeepers. The photographic wall display shows how fascinated and involved the children were. The local vicar visits the school every term and the children have a Christmas 'sing-along' at the parish church. They also visit the local post office and greengrocer to buy stamps and vegetables. The two community rooms are well used by outside agencies for the benefit of parents and children and play schemes are run for children from the Centre, and the local community, during the holidays. There is a particularly good relationship with a local business that has sponsored the Centre's brochure and the outside sheltered area, whilst a senior manager has been co-opted onto the governing body as finance governor.
24. The Centre produces a very informative brochure that provides parents with all the information they require. The regular newsletters keep them updated on future events, as do the many posters on the parents' noticeboards. Most parents feel they are kept well informed about their children's progress but the poor response to the pre-inspection meeting and questionnaire reflect the difficulty the Centre is experiencing in maintaining a regular dialogue about the curriculum with many of its parents. However, those who did respond felt their views were actively sought.
25. The Centre has a very close relationship with six other Nursery schools in the Cambridgeshire Nursery Circle. The Circle provides opportunities for professional support and development of staff and the sharing of good practice. The schools' special educational needs coordinators also meet regularly to ensure expertise is shared. They publicise their wide range of family support programmes collectively, making them accessible to parents of children in all the schools. A good partnership exists with the on-site primary school and other feeder primary schools, which ensures the smooth transfer of children between the two schools, and they are also involved in joint activities. Students from secondary schools and colleges are welcomed on work and training placements. An innovative contact has seen a student work on the design and practical development of the outside quiet areas.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the Centre are good.** The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the Centre. She is an effective leader. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and are supportive of all that the centre is achieving. The staff work well together and are positively embracing the growing range of services that they offer.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management of the Centre's additional services are good.
- The leadership by the headteacher is very good and she has a very clear vision for the development of the Centre.
- Day-to-day management allows daily activities to run smoothly.

### **Commentary**

26. The leadership by the head is very good. She has a clear vision and high aspirations for the Centre. She is well aware of what needs to be developed further. This is the second year since the centre has been open, and an effective relationship has been built between other agencies and drop-in activities. This has created an inclusive environment in which children, parents and families are warmly welcomed.
27. Management is good overall. Day-to-day management allows the many activities within the centre to work and run smoothly. Systems are now well established and allow all to go about their daily work efficiently. Staff training is well linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. Financial management is thorough.
28. There is a thorough school improvement plan which reflects and promotes the Centre's clear vision for development. All staff and governors are involved in its formation and it is regularly reviewed with time given to reflect on the progress that is being made. Areas identified for improvement are relevant and realistic, reflecting the centre's ethos to support not just the children but their families and the community as well.
29. Planning, teaching and learning are regularly monitored by the headteacher and constructive feedback given to all staff. This results in good quality teaching and learning across the Nursery and culminates in an ethos in which every individual is valued and praised so that standards are raised. The stimulating learning environment reflects the ethos of the leadership and management team.
30. The school undertakes regular self-evaluation. Children are asked what they think about the Nursery and what they enjoy about their learning. These thoughts and opinions are recorded by staff and any issues then acted upon.
31. The governing body shares the headteacher's clear vision for the development of the Centre and are supportive of what it is aiming for. Governors are well informed and come into school regularly. They have undergone extensive training since the previous inspection and now have a much clearer knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the Centre. They are involved in the development of the improvement plan and are regularly updated about all developments. They are led well by the headteacher and are beginning to understand their role of asking more questions. They ensure that statutory requirements are met.
32. Subject co-ordinators have strong knowledge of their areas of the curriculum, and of how young children learn and develop. This is instrumental in the success of the children in becoming independent learners.
33. The budget is satisfactorily administered and the governing body oversees actions. The principles of best value are used wisely to ensure that money is clearly allocated to where the greatest needs are. The expenditure per pupil is high. The carry forward was used to furnish the building after the move to the new site, and for extra staffing in order to support the move. Overall, the Centre gives good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	352,283	Balance from previous year	50,678
Total expenditure	379,997	Balance carried forward to the next year	22,963

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Expenditure per pupil	4,068
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## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING**

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

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

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

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

- Children are very good at working independently.
- Children achieve very well because good teaching supports, challenges and encourages them to work hard and take responsibility for their own learning at an early age.
- Children's attainment is above the expected levels for this age.

##### **COMMENTARY**

34. Very good teaching and learning ensure that children achieve very well and are likely to reach and frequently exceed standards expected by the end of the Reception year. The staff work hard to provide a very good range of activities to promote children's confidence and independence. As a result, children develop very good learning habits and the lively environment provides interest and stimulation to encourage their motivation and co-operation.
35. Even at this early stage, many children are able to maintain attention and listen quietly, and are confident to try new things and use their emerging skills in English. This leads to a settled and harmonious learning environment, well suited to very young children, some of whom have learning needs. They are supported and challenged by staff to work well with others, sharing and taking turns. For example, in the role-play area, children waited patiently for their turns to be vets to examine sick animals. Children are learning to behave well, and develop good social skills from working alongside other children.
36. Staff encourage independence and responsibility and, if needed, direct the children firmly but gently, supporting their self-esteem. For example, when children are in the pretend play areas they share and take turns. Only when children cannot solve disputes do staff intervene to ensure fairness. At the beginning of sessions, children find their name tags and register themselves. In this way, they learn to be independent and responsible. Children are able to work on their own for extended periods, for example, when they sort people and sea creatures and put them on the ship or the sea.
37. Staff treat children and their parents with friendliness, courtesy and respect and are very good role models for developing these qualities in the children. There is good emphasis on learning social skills, such as saying thank you and please. Children share and eat happily together at lunchtime. They use cutlery, feed themselves, and are supported well by the staff who sit with them.

#### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching and learning are good, leading to children's good achievement.
- This area of learning is well planned and assessed.

### Commentary

38. When they begin at the Nursery, many children's literacy skills are well below the expectations for their age. The good teaching and the provision of a varied range of activities help to interest and challenge them. As a result, children develop enthusiasm and enjoyment, and achieve well in this important area of learning. Despite making good progress, many are not likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy by the end of the Reception. A very small number of children who have English as an additional language are fairly fluent and their achievement is similar to their English-speaking peers. The three children who are new to English are being well supported. Children with special educational needs achieve well.
39. Every opportunity is taken to extend children's vocabulary skills and imaginative and exciting provision gives children good confidence for talking, safe in the knowledge that staff will listen to them with respect and interest. Adults keep detailed records of children's language development and use this information to track progress. Children develop their speaking and listening skills well through pretend and imaginative play; for example, in the pretend Vet's Surgery or the outside play areas, or when going out to visit places. Most children's listening skills are average, but their speaking skills are relatively less developed. Children talk about their experiences clearly and are understood by children and staff. However, a significant number of children have speech difficulties and specialist staff support them very well.
40. Children have many opportunities to listen to stories or choose books to read with adults. Good use is made of big books and non-fiction books to reinforce learning. Children talk about the pictures and know that print carries meaning and are learning letter sounds. More frequent sessions to explore phonic skills will further improve children's reading skills. Early writing is taught well throughout the school with many examples of children's first writing on displays, letters and post cards and on lists to buy groceries. Singing well-known rhymes helps the development of speaking and listening skills and motivates the children to try new words.
41. All children are encouraged to take books home to share with parents. There are story sacks and other books for families to use. Children's progress is tracked very well and information is used to plan future learning. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its good provision, teaching and learning, achievement and leadership and management in this area of learning.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in their mathematical development, especially as their skills on entry to the centre are very weak.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Resources are good and are used effectively to support the children's learning.
- Sometimes, opportunities to reinforce the children's mathematical understanding are missed.

## **Commentary**

42. Many children start their education in the centre with very weak skills in their mathematical development, and very little knowledge about shapes or simple problem-solving, although their ideas about numbers are slightly better. From this relatively low starting point, all groups of children achieve well, including those children identified as having special educational needs, although their skills are still below what is normally expected for this age group. This good achievement is a result of the good access they have to a good range of interesting and stimulating activities and the staff interact and participate effectively with them in their play. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the staff use opportunities as they arise to help the children understand about numbers and the purpose of counting. For example, staff ask children to help them count the number of children present and those who are staying for their lunch. The children are also learning to count the number of their friends in a group. They are showing an increasing interest in counting and use the appropriate mathematical language spontaneously. One little girl, said "...my brother's not eight anymore, I can't remember what comes after eight". After she had counted from one and reached nine she was able to say, "He's nine now". Staff also reinforce this type of work and the correct use of mathematical language effectively, for instance, helping the children to count the number of pieces of fruit as they prepare for snack time. However, there are occasions when opportunities are missed to develop the children's ideas about numbers and how they increase and decrease and there are few displays of numerals for the staff to refer to as they talk to the children.
43. The children are developing their ideas about shapes and space, they can appreciate that some shapes will fit in a particular way and others will not. The staff support this type of work well indicating that a shape is a 'cuboid' or that some shapes will not fit in a space because they are not the correct length. Work in handling and observing living things enhances this work, for instance, the children were able to recognise that giant snails had curved shells and the staff reinforced this very well, pointing out the spiral shape. They were also able to compare the giant snails with the smaller ones which they were observing and could indicate which they wanted to hold. The children are learning about patterns, and how to create a repeating pattern using different colours. A good range and variety of activities reinforce ideas about comparing and solving simple problems. For example, the children use sand, water and pulley systems to explore weight, capacity and to work out how to transfer contents from one container to another. They have regular opportunities to be involved in cookery and through this work they are also able to compare the amounts of ingredients. They have observed the differences in their heights and the staff use these types of activities and the good range of resources well to support the children's learning. The children use the computer programs effectively to practice their skills in counting and recognising two-dimensional shapes.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching.
- Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning.
- Resources and accommodation are used very well to provide a wide range of stimulating activities that support children's exploration and investigation skills.

### Commentary

44. Some children enter the Nursery with very limited knowledge of this area of learning. Teaching and planning are consistently very good, and as a result, children progress at a much better rate than might be expected. Most children achieve very well and are likely to meet the goals for knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the Reception year and more able children will exceed the goals in scientific investigations. A diverse range of appropriate and interesting activities stimulates children's curiosity and promotes their understanding.
45. All children show an interest in computers and many children learn to use the mouse and keyboard as they explore different programs. The school makes very good use of digital cameras. Children are photographed as they work and they see their photos on the interactive white board. Children are developing confidence in using digital cameras themselves. They use the cameras with control and assurance, give commands to pixie to move forward and backward and use paint programmes confidently. A specialist information and communication technology teacher supports children in the use of interactive whiteboard. Children were observed learning about their topic on mini-beasts. They sorted pictures of mini-beasts into those that fly and those who crawl. They learn names about the parts of their body and learn about their habitats. The school gives a high priority to enrich children's learning through information and communication technology.
46. Children are provided with many rich opportunities for investigation and discovery; for example, when children grow flowers and vegetables. They sow seeds and observe them grow. Learning is well supported by adults who challenge children's interest by asking them to observe what happens when a flower is put in coloured water. At other times, children investigate the effects of mixing shredded wheat in milk or corn flour in coloured water to compare and contrast the effects of combining two materials. At all times, staff support learning well by using stimulating questions and prompting children to observe closely and extend their vocabulary.
47. Children have many opportunities to observe mini-beasts such as the Giant African Snail, observe caterpillars turn into butterflies, find centipedes and wood lice, and learn about life of a bee when a visitor comes to talk about bee-keeping. Picture reference books are used well by children to see how snails move and where they sleep. They observe how pulleys work when they pull their buckets of sand. Children differentiate between past and present when they compare and contrast their skills with those when they were babies. They learn about other countries when Kipper Bear

visits Italy and Japan. Such opportunities are an improvement on the previous inspection.

48. Children's individual plans have very clear targets that are monitored well. There is a particularly high level of commitment to inclusion, and children's needs are very well met through support, including speech therapy, learning support from both within and out of the school, extended provision, well-chosen activities and the rich and diverse curriculum. The school has taken the initiative of being a healthy eating school. Fruit and milk is always available for children to take whenever they require.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum promotes very good achievement in this area of learning.
- The outdoor area is well resourced and organised. It is used well to help children make good progress in developing their physical skills.

### **Commentary**

49. Throughout the Nursery, teaching is good and staff promote children's physical development successfully so that many will meet the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they leave the Nursery. This is very good achievement. The curriculum in the Nursery gives children the chance to develop their dexterity by using malleable materials, rolling out and shaping dough or clay and constructing models from a wide range of materials and toys. They handle tools, such as scissors and other objects, with increasing control. Some children are very clear at explaining what they have made such as decorating boxes for toffees. Outside, children ride tricycles, climb, jump, and play with increasing control with balls. A number of children are successfully riding bikes without stabilisers; this is high achievement for children of this age. These tasks help children to balance, travel along, move around, climb, roll and show awareness of space. Many children move with confidence, imagination and in safety. The very good use of outside space allows for a free-flow of activities between indoors and outdoors enhancing children's physical development.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Nursery are encouraged to use their initiative to enable them to achieve well.
- They successfully retrieve their own resources when making things using their imagination.

### **Commentary**

50. Teaching is good in this area and children achieve well. The learning environment, inside and out, supports children to enable them to express themselves creatively.

Examples and photographs of paintings and of collages show children are given opportunities to express and communicate their ideas through their artwork, and design and technology. These are often linked to other areas of learning. Role-play activities, including dressing up as different characters and, for example, acting out what happens at the vet's promote good achievement in the use of imagination and communication of ideas. Teachers encourage children to be independent learners, and they select and retrieve their own resources in order to support what they are trying to make.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	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	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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