

INSPECTION REPORT

TRURO EARLY EXCELLENCE CENTRE

Truro

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111790

Headteacher: Carol Kimberly

Lead inspector: Peter Kerr

Dates of inspection: 8 – 9 February 2005

Inspection number: 268147

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Early Excellence Centre
School category:	Maintained
Age range of children:	3 -5
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	30
School address:	Higher Trehaverne Truro Cornwall
Postcode:	TR1 3RJ
Telephone number:	01872 274693
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Claudia Pitman
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Truro Nursery school was designated a rural Early Excellence Centre (EEC) in October 2001, with most services becoming operational after April 2002. In addition to the 30 place¹ on-site nursery the school also provides a range of 'outreach' services in Truro and the extensive surrounding rural area. The school's on-site provision now includes:

- Wraparound care from 08:00 to 17:30.
- A weekly toy library and Baby Club; childminder 'drop-in' sessions and training.
- A variety of training for practitioners and parents and carers.
- The off-site outreach services comprise:
 - 'Stay and Play' sessions in Truro and surrounding rural locations.
 - 'Baby Talk' sessions (under the 'Early Start' programme).
 - Childminding services and home visits.

Significantly more staff are employed than at the time of the last inspection to provide all these services. Some of the work of the school is financed by the 'Sure Start Unit' in order to help socially and economically disadvantaged families. Children start at the nursery when they are three years old, and move on to reception classes in other schools for their final year in the Foundation Stage.² All of the children on roll at the time of the inspection were from white British ethnic backgrounds and all spoke English as their home language. They come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, with a below average profile overall and below average attainment on entry. Initial attainment in communication, language and literacy is well below average. Five of the children were on the school's list of children with special educational needs. The special needs include hearing, sight and physical impairment. Occasionally one or two children for whom English is an additional language attend the nursery, but none was on roll at the time of the inspection.

¹ The nursery accommodates up to 60 children part-time, which is equivalent to 30 full-time places.

² The Foundation Stage is the key stage designated by the government to precede Key Stage 1 in the first year of infant school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23483		Lead inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Mathematical development Physical development
9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector	
11590	Frances Forrester	Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Creative development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good standard of education and very good outreach services with excellent features. It is well led and governed and very well managed, and gives good value for money.

The Centre's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- An excellent partnership with parents and carers makes a big contribution to the children's progress.
- The work of the school is very well managed.
- Children with special educational needs achieve very well because of very good support.
- Provision for health, safety and welfare are very good and induction procedures are excellent.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school; the children have very good attitudes, behave very well and thoroughly enjoy the nursery.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in personal, social and emotional development.
- Classroom observations do not focus enough on the needs of the quicker learners and on the promotion of mathematical development.

Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The minor weaknesses that were identified have been addressed, although there is room for further improvement in how assessments are used to provide stimulating learning activities for quicker learners. Steps have been taken to raise multi-cultural awareness and to provide extra support for children with English as an additional language. Teaching and learning are more consistently good and management has improved. The high quality extended services that have been established help enormously to prepare the children and their families for nursery education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The children achieve well. Attainment on entry is below average overall and well below average in communication, language and literacy. The children make good progress from the start and are on course to achieve most of the Foundation Stage early learning goals before the end of reception. The children achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development. They quickly learn nursery routines, behave very well and develop very good relationships with their teachers and friends, showing a good level of independence for their age. Many of them are on course to exceed the early learning goals in these aspects of their development. The children develop above average communication skills but because of their low starting points in language and literacy are unlikely to achieve all the relevant early learning goals in communication, language and literacy before the end of reception. Achievement is good in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development, which is an improvement since the last inspection when achievement was satisfactory. Achievement remains good in mathematical development, but opportunities are missed to enable the children to explore and use mathematics throughout the day in different activities. The good outdoor area contributes to good achievement in physical development. The children have very good attitudes to their work and play, showing an eagerness to learn and great enjoyment in new experiences. They behave very well and develop very good relationships with the adults working in the nursery and with their friends.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

A good quality of education is provided. The curriculum is good. It covers all the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage and offers some exciting extra experiences. **Teaching and learning are good.** The teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team to plan and deliver effective learning opportunities. Support for children with a wide range of special educational needs is particularly good; opportunities for children who learn more quickly are not so well thought out.

The school enjoys an excellent partnership with parents and carers, greatly enhanced by some excellent outreach services such as the 'Stay and Play' sessions, Baby Club and toy library. A high quality standard of care and guidance is provided, based on the thorough knowledge the staff have of the children and their families. The centre has very good links with other schools and services and enjoys a deservedly high reputation in the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the expanding range of services very well. There is a very good team spirit. All members of staff share a common view of how the nursery should be developed, and collaborate well together to realise their aims. They create a very welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, in which the children and their families feel at ease. The governors provide very helpful support and advice to the headteacher and staff and ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. Their recently established monitoring and evaluating procedures are particularly effective, providing the school with an independent perspective on different aspects of its work and helpful pointers for improvement.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and all the services that it provides. The views expressed at the well attended parents' meeting were very positive. The parents particularly appreciate the calm, happy atmosphere in the nursery, the knowledge the hard-working staff have of the children and their families and the way they support individuals when the need arises. The children are happy and confident in the nursery and like the friendships that it offers as well as the activities they take part in.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve classroom observations to:
 - ensure more challenge for the quicker learners;
 - provide more opportunities for the children to use their mathematical skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY THE CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The children achieve well overall and are on course to reach most of the Foundation Stage early learning goals. They achieve very well to exceed the goals in personal, social and emotional development; they achieve well overall in communication, language and literacy but are still unlikely to achieve the goals related to reading and writing. Children with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good individual support that they receive. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for personal, social and emotional development ensures high achievement in this area of learning.
- The children's communication skills are good, but despite good progress, their attainment in language and literacy is below expectations.
- Children with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Sometimes quicker learners do not achieve as well as they could.
- Progress is slow in some aspects of mathematical development.

Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery, taken over the intake as a whole, is below what is expected for this age. It is well below average in the key area of language and literacy.
2. The children make good progress to achieve well overall. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, and most are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning before the end of reception, representing very good achievement. In communication, language and literacy, the children make good progress overall. They make very good progress in communication skills, putting them on course to achieve the relevant early learning goals in this area by the end of reception. In language and literacy, the children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals by the end of reception despite the good progress currently being made because they have so much ground to make up. Achievement in mathematical development is satisfactory. Although the children are making satisfactory progress in learning the basics of numbers and shapes, they do not use mathematics often enough to consolidate and extend their understanding and skills.
3. The children's achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is good. This is an improvement on the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Good achievement in physical development has been maintained. The children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in these areas of learning.
4. Children with special educational needs make very good progress because of the skilled individual support that they receive. Their needs are taken fully into account in the planning of daily activities and in the supervision of the children as they play. As a result, they achieve very well. Children who learn more quickly achieve satisfactorily, but because their needs are not so carefully identified, the school cannot be sure that they are achieving as much as they are capable of. There are no discernable differences in achievement between boys and girls.

The children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal qualities are developed well. The children attend regularly and they arrive at the Nursery on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of relationships is a very strong feature of the school.
- Children's personal development is promoted effectively and as a result their attitudes are very positive.
- Regular and punctual attendance is contributing well to the children's good standards of achievement.

Commentary

5. Throughout the inspection the strengths of the relationships between the members of staff and the children were very obvious. At the pre-inspection meeting parents spoke very positively about the calm, happy atmosphere. They were very impressed at how the staff know the children as individuals and show a genuine interest in their families. The children's confidence to work and play contentedly was visible in a number of sessions seen by the inspectors. During activities connected to the Chinese New Year a busy industrious atmosphere was created; the children were happily absorbed and asked questions confidently.
6. The nurturing of children's personal skills has a high priority in the school. All adults who work with the children are kind and considerate towards them. As a consequence the children are developing an appreciation of the needs of others, for example learning to take turns on the equipment when playing out of doors. Members of staff also use the sensory room well to foster children's social skills. The children are developing independence through choosing their own activities and getting changed to play outside. They are learning to think for themselves but with the knowledge that there are adults to help them. The school has responded well to a weakness from the previous report in the provision for multicultural awareness. Nepalese musicians performed in the Nursery; school library books show other ethnic groups and some are written in two languages; Diwali and the Chinese New Year are observed and Indian and African cultures have been celebrated with food and clothing from both continents. This helps to give the children a positive appreciation of the cultural heritages of different people in the wider British society.

Attendance

Parents show their support for the Nursery by ensuring that their children arrive at school regularly and on time. The children self register and teachers also mark registers and any unexplained absences are followed up. Regular attendance is having a positive impact on the standards that the children achieve and on their personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good and a good Foundation Stage curriculum is provided. Provision for health and safety, and the children's care and guidance is very good and the school has an excellent partnership with parents and very good community links.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory in mathematical development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good role models provided by the staff ensure very good relationships and very good achievement in personal, social and emotional development.
- The teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively as a team to plan and review activities, ensuring good continuity in the children’s learning.
- Purposeful interactions with the children by all teaching staff contribute well to the development of good communication skills.
- Children with specific needs are catered for very well.
- Very good assessment procedures ensure that a good record is kept of the children’s progress.
- Opportunities are missed to extend quicker learners and to enable the children to use their mathematical skills.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in seven lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	5	2	0	0	0

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

7. The good quality of teaching reported at the last inspection has been maintained. The very good relationships in the school and the staff’s thorough knowledge of the children and their families underpin the good teaching and learning that takes place, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in communication. The staff constantly engage with the children, ensuring that they know the classroom routines, explaining the rules of behaviour and encouraging the children to become independent and confident learners. A noticeable feature of the nursery is the extent to which the children communicate with each other, resulting partly from the good preparation they have received through the Early Excellence initiative. The staff build on this very successfully so that the majority of the children quickly progress towards the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and communication. Parents express great appreciation of this aspect of the nursery provision.
8. The staff are particularly resourceful in providing for children with a range of special educational needs. They thoroughly assess each child, making full use of information from outside agencies such as health and social services before deciding on a plan of action. The individual educational plans that are then drawn up contain relevant achievable goals for the children to work towards. Parents are kept fully involved from the start and the children’s progress is continually monitored and supported so that very rapid progress is made. The needs catered for include social and emotional difficulties and physical impairments. The very good example set by the staff encourages the other children to develop positive, caring attitudes towards those of their friends who need extra support and understanding. For example, they readily offer help to others who are not as confident as themselves in using the apparatus in the outdoor area.
9. A good range of activities is prepared each day to develop the children’s knowledge, skills and understanding in all six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. A good balance is struck between adult directed activities, such as making Chinese New Year cards, and free choice play activities. Painting is a daily option and at least one other creative activity is offered. Dressing-up is part of the provision for creative play, and the children bring in extra clothes for special events such as the Chinese New Year activities seen during the inspection. Music-making is also encouraged during such activities. Some of the role-play areas lack imagination in their preparation, so are not used to the full extent to stimulate a wide range of developmental play.
10. Teachers have expressed a wish for more training in how to develop mathematics in different activities. The inspection found that this is indeed a useful area for further development.

Opportunities were clearly missed, both to identify when particular children needed more support with basic skills such as counting up to five and when more mathematically confident children could have been challenged to extend and apply their skills during role-play.

The curriculum

Truro Nursery School provides a good quality curriculum for its children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.
- Children are encouraged to develop independence in their choices, but there is insufficient guidance and monitoring of their involvement in activities.
- The support for the children who have special educational needs is very successful.
- The accommodation is very spacious and attractive and there is a good level of staffing.
- The additional Early Excellence services provide excellent support for learning.

Commentary

11. The school has sustained the good range of learning opportunities evident in the last inspection. Members of staff create a friendly ethos which successfully promotes the children's learning. The high priority given to supporting the children's emotional, personal and social development ensures that the children settle quickly and happily into their daily routines and quickly develop good relationships with each other. When a child finds it difficult to share or take turns, he or she is helped to understand the consequences of their actions and to learn to deal with their emotions. This very good provision helps the children to begin making good progress in other areas of learning and prepares them well for the infant school.
12. The nursery provides a good range of activities to promote communication, language and literacy, creative and physical development and the children's knowledge of the world. Provision for early numeracy is satisfactory, but opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage children to count, observe mathematical patterns or solve problems during their play.
13. The children have equal opportunities to engage in all the available activities. They are encouraged to move from one room to another, to try out a variety of different activities, making them very independent. They learn to make choices and know which activities they prefer. The staff monitor involvement in some activities on a checklist, which is completed at the end of each day. There are procedures to restrict the number of children involved in the same activity, but these are not consistently implemented, and the time children spent on an activity is not monitored closely enough. As a result, some children who find concentration difficult often flit from one activity to another while others stay for too long at a 'favourite' activity.
14. The learning opportunities for children with special educational needs are very good because their needs are identified and addressed from an early stage. Appropriate support is put in place, even if this requires alterations to standard procedures, for example, arranging for a child to spend the whole day in school rather than the usual half day. The very effective special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that each child's programme of learning is planned carefully to identify the next steps in learning. This contributes very effectively to these children's very good achievement. The calm but stimulating environment in the small sensory room helps children with emotional and behavioural difficulties to learn to manage their behaviour more successfully.
15. The school is well staffed with teachers and teaching assistants who work very effectively as a team to make planning effective. They successfully weave opportunities for progress in most of the areas of learning into activities around a central topic, such as 'Pirates' or special theme

such as 'Pancake Day' or Chinese New Year. This helps to make learning fun for the children, as it did, for example, in the role-play in an imaginary Chinese restaurant.

16. The school's accommodation is very good. There are a number of extra rooms for teachers and teaching assistants to use with groups of children for a range of activities such as cooking and looking at books. The resources are satisfactory. Some, such as glove puppets and books, are attractive and well-matched to the needs of the children. Others seen in use were a little tired and less stimulating for the children. The new outside play area has a good range of climbing apparatus, tunnels and balancing equipment. The bark surface restricts the use that can be made of tricycles or other wheeled ride-on toys, but plans are in hand for a comprehensive overhaul of this provision.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure the care, guidance and welfare of the children are very effective. Achievement and personal development are monitored well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's thorough procedures ensure the children's health and safety.
- Excellent measures to settle children into the Nursery prepare the children well for learning.
- Assessment procedures are used well to support and guide the children.

Commentary

17. The well-established systems for safeguarding children's health and safety have improved since the last inspection. Governors and members of staff are vigilant and also carefully monitor off-site outreach activities and venues. Child protection procedures and first aid and medical support are very good; policies are regularly reviewed and staff training is up to date. Parents are very happy with the care that is taken of their children. Wraparound care in the mornings, at lunchtime and after school is very well organised and the children are supervised very well.
18. Parents are very happy with the settling in procedures. They receive very good information about the work of the Nursery and because communication is excellent between families and the school any problems are quickly picked up and nipped in the bud. Members of staff welcome the children and their parents into school in a very friendly way at the beginning of each session. This helps to reinforce the outstanding home/school partnership and enables the children to settle quickly into independent learning.
19. The headteacher has a very good overview of how well children are achieving and members of staff use assessment well to respond to individual children's needs. The staff keep detailed records of assessments, and they identify the next learning intention. However, the systems for keeping track of individual progress during the day are not consistently effective in getting the right level of challenge into activities. As a result, opportunities are missed to identify weak areas and cater for particular strengths, for example in mathematical development. Children's personal development is carefully monitored and the school works well with other agencies to provide support if necessary or relevant; for example health visitors and speech and language therapists.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has an excellent partnership with the parents. Links with the community and other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school encourages parents to be involved in their children's education exceptionally well.

- Parents are very well informed about what is happening in school and how well their children are doing.
- The school's outreach services are of great benefit to the local community.

Commentary

20. The excellent partnership the nursery has established with parents contributes to the children's achievements once they start school. It is based on a recognition of the value of each member of the school community. The headteacher has established an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect. All parents, whatever their background or culture, are made to feel welcome. The headteacher's channels of communication are excellent – both she and her teaching and non-teaching staff are highly visible around the school and parents feel they can trust everyone working at the nursery. Without exception, the parents at the pre-inspection meeting thought that the school was excellent in this respect, and felt very much part of a team working in their children's best interests. During the inspection, parents were greeted at the beginning and end of the morning and afternoon sessions, helping the children to settle in very well and to encourage the parents to be actively involved in their children's education. The baby club, toy library and 'Stay and Play' sessions contribute enormously to this enterprise. They are calm, purposeful sessions in which parents from a wide variety of backgrounds gain in confidence along with their children in the process of development and education. Discussions with parents at one of the 'Stay and Play' sessions during the inspection showed that they are very happy with the opportunity to meet other parents and receive support and guidance for a range of issues from the teaching team and health visitors. These services contribute very positively to the children's very good achievements in personal, social and emotional development.
21. The school consults parents regularly on the Nursery's provision using questionnaires and more informal means. Responses are analysed carefully by the headteacher and changes are made if applicable. For example a louder doorbell and a password system for when children are collected have been put in place.
22. The governors' annual report and prospectus, together with the handbook, ensure that parents have a good knowledge of all that the school offers. Topic notes and newsletters, written in a friendly, easy-to-read style inform parents of what their children will be learning. The 'profile sheets' that are shared with parents at formal interviews during the termly open weeks give them a very good indication of the progress their children are making. These sheets, along with samples of work, are built into a very useful portfolio that parents are given when their children leave the Nursery. The school's very good partnership with the receiving infant school ensures that the children have a very comfortable transition to the final part of their Foundation Stage education in reception.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and the range of services provided is very well managed. Good governance contributes to the effectiveness of all the provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership and manages all aspects of provision very well.
- The staff to whom management responsibilities are delegated are very effective in their roles.
- The governors know the school well and provide good support and challenge.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not focused enough on the challenge given to children of all abilities.

Commentary

23. The headteacher has continued to provide good leadership for the work of the nursery while at the same time successfully overseeing a substantial expansion of its role. She keeps up to date with legislation governing provision for pre-nursery children and ensures that the staff and governors are aware of their obligations. The wider provision within the community has been very successfully established and is making an evident contribution to children's achievement. For example, the excellent baby club and toy library on the premises are encouraging socialising among babies and young children and giving them confidence to explore the world about them. This puts them in a much stronger position to flourish and make progress when they begin in the nursery. The 'Stay and Play' sessions in other locations serve a similar purpose very effectively. The increasing confidence engendered in parents and carers in these sessions also helps them to support their children with their learning later on.
24. The management of all aspects of the expanded provision is very good. The staff has increased twofold during this process to manage the various aspects of provision, such as the Baby Club and the outreach services. This has been handled very well. Arrangements for continuing professional development are very good. The staff feel supported and have proved very effective in their roles. Existing members of staff have also been encouraged and supported to take on extra responsibilities. The current very good provision for special educational needs, for example, is co-ordinated very effectively by one of the teaching assistants. Arrangements for the continuing professional development of the staff are very good.
25. The headteacher has managed all this change smoothly and effectively, keeping the full trust and confidence of all the staff. She has also maintained a good overview of provision within the nursery classroom through joint planning with her relief teacher. This has ensured consistent coverage of all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum in the morning and afternoon sessions. However, the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum has not been monitored closely enough to ensure that all the children are receiving adequate challenge, especially the quicker learners.
26. Governors fulfil their duties well, ensuring that the school fulfils all its statutory obligations, such as compliance with race equality legislation. They are particularly helpful in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the outreach provision, including health and safety. The reports on these visits reflect a clear purpose and provide constructive ideas for improvement.
27. Financial management is good. The governors and headteacher together apply good principles of best value to all their spending. They do not have data to compare the school's performance with other similar schools, but use a wide range of evaluations to judge how effective various aspects of provision are. They regularly canvass the opinions of parents and carers of children involved in the nursery and outreach services to ensure that their needs are being met. This contributes greatly to the very good level of support the school has from its client group. Spending is closely tied to the school improvement plan, which is reviewed regularly. The priorities in the plan are adjusted according to emerging developments and needs.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The expanded services established when the school became an Early Excellence Centre have all contributed to improving the children's development. The children and their parents and carers are very well prepared for the start of nursery through their involvement in the Baby Club, Toy Library, 'Stay and Play' sessions as well as the child-minding training and supervision that are offered. Parents who lack confidence in talking, playing and reading with their children gain assurance through observing and talking with other parents and staff during these sessions. The children become more aware of their surroundings and get used to relating to a range of adults and other children. Although the most obvious benefits are in the realm of the children's personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical, creative and mathematical development are all enhanced through these activities. Because attendance at these sessions is unpredictable, the school is not able to track individual children's progress, but it does keep records of how groups of children improve. These show good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in communication and language. The overall good quality of provision in the six areas of learning has been maintained since the last inspection, with improvements in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development from satisfactory to good. The school recognises that there are areas for improvement in provision for mathematical development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children quickly settle into the nursery because of the excellent preparation they receive.
- The children are very independent and confident.
- Lots of opportunities are offered for the children to socialise and make choices.
- Some children need more guidance when making choices.

Commentary

28. The school continues to succeed in its aim of ensuring a high quality of provision in this vital area of learning. The children are well prepared to take the first crucial step of separating from their mother or other main carer. They then quickly progress to the stage where they show increasing confidence in selecting and carrying out activities, and many achieve the early learning goal of maintaining concentration in small and large groups. This is a good preparation for the next stage of their education. The children are given plenty of experiences of being able to work alone at tasks they have chosen, take part in small group activities under the guidance of a member of staff or be part of a larger group paying attention to an adult or other stimulus, during story or singing times for example. The excellent rapport between staff provides a clear role model for all the children to develop very strong relationships. The staff make very good use of their thorough knowledge of the children and their families to ensure that individual personalities and needs are taken into account. For example, children who find it difficult to concentrate are included in groups with more mature children so that they have good role models for behaviour and persisting with tasks. On some occasions during the inspection, some children were not provided with enough guidance when choosing what to do and as a result flitted from one activity to another too readily. The very good overall provision ensures that the vast majority of the children are on course to achieve most of the early learning goals in this area well before the end of the Foundation Stage.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff give the children lots of opportunities to talk and discuss their activities.
- There are regular opportunities to use a computer or to listen to story tapes.
- Some of the resources provided for children to promote their role-play are unimaginative.

Commentary

29. The school has maintained its good provision since the last inspection. The overall attainment of children starting at the nursery is considerably below expectations for their age. Many have poor language skills and immature speech. The good quality teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning, so that they achieve well and become confident speakers. Listening to and recalling a good range of rhymes and songs helps the children to develop their memory and extend their vocabulary. The nursery provides a suitable range of activities to develop early reading and writing skills. Every opportunity is taken to tell children stories and to stimulate discussion. The school develops the children's interest in reading by providing a library from which they can borrow books. The children learn to understand that written words have meanings through a range of activities, including sharing books with an adult and looking at charts and posters. Activities are also provided to encourage the children to pretend to write notes and instructions and to take messages. For instance they pretended to take bookings in a Chinese restaurant during the Chinese New Year activities. Despite this good progress, many of the children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals related to reading and writing, but are on course to achieve the communication goals. Members of staff ask the children lots of questions to stimulate their ability to communicate. Taking messages and repeating instructions enables the children to make good progress in listening and in broadening their vocabulary.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' planning ensures that all the children cover the full curriculum in mathematical development.
- Songs and rhymes are used well to help the children to learn basic counting skills.
- Opportunities that arise for children to explore mathematics during the day are sometimes overlooked.

Commentary

30. The basic ground is covered well. The children enjoy a colour, shape and number-rich environment within which to play, and activities are planned to teach basic sorting, counting and number recognition. Mathematical development is planned into some general activities well. For example, in a session in the sensory room in which the children were exploring the effects of different lighting on the objects in the room, the teaching assistant used counting down from five to zero each time a switch was turned on or off by herself or a child. This reinforced their awareness of the correct order of numbers from nought to five. Good records are kept of the children's progress, but opportunities are lost during activities to challenge and support individuals as they play. Mistakes or signs that a child may be able to do more than was expected in an activity are overlooked. This applies particularly to the insight that mathematics may be used to solve a practical problem such as finding enough people to fill the places set at a picnic. Some members of staff have expressed the wish for more training in this aspect of provision in recent questionnaires. The school recognises this needs more support and training, which the inspection confirms.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are confident to make models and to use simple tools.
- Children use computers confidently.
- Due to new building developments, there are presently only limited opportunities to observe nature, although the school has plans to develop a new garden area.

Commentary

31. The school has improved its provision for promoting knowledge and understanding of the world since the last inspection, when it was only satisfactory. Most children entering the nursery have very limited life experiences beyond their own home environment. The good quality teaching successfully develops a better understanding of the world in which they live. This ensures that they are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The children control the computer mouse with skill from an early age. They confidently follow a story, listening with headphones to the commentary. Topics such as 'Food', 'Weather', 'Transport' or 'Senses' are used to place the children's learning in an interesting context. Their knowledge is enhanced through the availability of big science books. Members of staff encourage children to look in books for information, and to observe and discover similarities and differences between different natural objects. Enjoyable first-hand experiences are provided wherever possible, which the children greatly enjoy, and which develop a range of skills. They plant seeds and watch the developing shoots, for example, and predict what will happen to ingredients when they bake and cook food. The school regularly invites visitors to talk to the children. For example, the local police and animal lecture service. When finances permit, the children go on visits to places of interest, for instance a pantomime or the zoo.
32. The children are beginning to have an understanding of other cultures. They celebrated the Chinese New Year during the inspection, for example. They took part in a colourful procession which helped them to learn that dragons play an important role in Chinese culture.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children enjoy regular opportunities to use the extensive outside playing area.
- A good range of tools and equipment is available for the children to use independently.
- Children with special educational needs make particularly good progress.

Commentary

33. Good provision has been maintained since the last inspection enabling the children to achieve well. Most are on course to reach the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of reception. The children's daily routines include many activities that encourage them to become more aware of how they move and the space around them. The daily sessions in the outside play area are particularly useful in this respect. The children move in a great variety of ways, including crawling, running and climbing, and the apparatus that is always available encourages them to develop a good sense of balance. The children use their own ideas for increasing the physical challenges they face. For examples, groups of children were seen collaborating on the construction of ramps out of wooden blocks to enable them to move from the ground level onto a raised platform. Their excellent communication skills were evident in

this exercise, which further consolidated their understanding of how useful and enjoyable co-operation with others can be. The staff are skilled at encouraging the children to try more ambitious things and to become more aware of their friends and the space around them as they play.

34. Within the classroom areas, the children are provided with a wide range of tools, materials and equipment to work with which expand their skills of physical manipulation. Account is taken of left-handedness in the available selection of tools such as scissors, and the children are given good support and guidance as needed to use such implements safely and successfully. Children with special physical needs, such as sight or hearing impairment or a specific physical weakness are very well catered for. They are given individual support as and when needed, but are also encouraged to be as independent as possible. They make very good progress and achieve very well relative to their starting points. The other children are very mature in the way they accept each other's limitations and offer their own support where appropriate. This reflects the very good example set by the staff.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of colourful materials available each day for children to use as they make models and paint pictures.
- Attractive hand puppets are always available.

Commentary

35. The children have access to a wide range of coloured materials from which to make models and create collage pictures. They are confident to paint at an easel and produce attractive pictures. They behave well and some get on with their pictures independently. They draw and make models such as decorating paper kites to celebrate Chinese New Year. They use junk materials to make two- and three-dimensional models. They use their imagination in role-play, for instance pretending to eat with chopsticks. They express themselves creatively in dance and story telling. They also have regular opportunities to create paintings and collage pictures. For instance, during a project on pirates they painted pirate ships and flags. The children will happily tackle creating a large picture as a group. During the inspection, they made a long Chinese picture with drawings of dragons and kites, adding collage tails to enhance their picture. They clearly enjoyed this activity, especially cutting sticky tape to secure the paper to the floor. Other creative activities include printing with string, blow painting with bubbles and creating patterns with a roller ball. Hand puppets and small figures provide further opportunities for children to use their imagination.
36. The range of good quality puppets and small model figures of people from around the world help to expand the children's cultural awareness as well as their imagination.
37. The children enjoy singing a wide variety of songs and making up their own music on a range of percussion instruments. During the inspection some children played the instruments as a 'band' to accompany the Chinese New Year dragon procession. The school encourages the children to develop listening skills and to experiment with different sounds. The outdoor area is used well to enhance the provision, for instance though acting out nursery rhymes or participating in large ring games.
38. The school aims to make learning opportunities enjoyable and stimulating. It has successfully improved its provision since the last inspection when it was only satisfactory. The good range of learning opportunities ensures the children are on course to meet the early learning goals for creative development by the time they reach the end of the reception year.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

