

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WALBROOK NURSERY SCHOOL**

Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112475

Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Bradbury

Lead inspector: Mrs Rajinder Harrison

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 268188

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Nursery  
School category: Maintained  
Age range of children: 3 - 5  
Gender of children: Mixed  
Number on roll; 80 children; 2 full-time

School address: Middleton Street  
Normanton  
Derby  
Derbyshire  
Postcode: DE23 8QJ

Telephone number: (01332) 772 434  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr Paul Turnbull  
governors:

Date of previous 9<sup>th</sup> March 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Walbrook Nursery School is an LEA maintained Nursery for children aged three and four. Two children attend full time and 78 for half-day sessions. It is currently full, with a waiting list of children wanting places. It was purpose built in 1973 and is situated in inner city Derby. The socio-economic circumstances of the area in which the school is situated are very much lower than the national average and the number of children entitled to free school meals is about 31 per cent. Attainment on entry is well below average.

Thirteen children (16 per cent) have special educational needs and these include moderate learning, social, emotional and behavioural, speech and communication, visual impairment and physical impairment difficulties. The children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with only 15 per cent being of White British origin. Three children (4 per cent) are from families who are refugees or asylum seekers and 67 per cent are from families where English is not the home language. Some have no English at all when they enter the school and 37 (46 per cent) are in an early stage of learning English. Despite being in an area where many families are transient, the school has a low pupil turnover and a number of children come from areas outside the immediate locality.

The school gained Schools Achievement Awards in 2000, 2001 and 2002. It is currently working towards a Health Promoting Schools Award. In 2000 it was listed in HMCI's Annual Report as a school achieving excellence for its children and became a Beacon School. Since then it has disseminated good practice across the city and in other authorities.



## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18059	Rajinder Harrison	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
19361	Keith Ross	Lay inspector	
5531	Janet Croft	Team inspector	Foundation Stage – all areas of learning Special educational needs

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**This is an excellent school.** Teaching is very good and, as a result, children make very good gains in their learning. Standards at the end of their year in the Nursery are above those expected for children at this age. Overall achievement is very high. Relationships throughout the school and children's personal development are excellent. Overall leadership and management are excellent. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are excellent.
- Curriculum provision and procedures to monitor children's progress are excellent.
- Children are extremely well cared for and their personal development is outstanding.
- Provision for children with special educational needs and for those learning English as a new language is very good.
- Children's attitudes to learning are excellent and their behaviour is exemplary.
- Relationships with parents, the community and other schools are excellent.
- The school is an example of perfect harmony where every child really does matter.

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1999 has been very good. The school has addressed the previous key issues very effectively. The conservatory and the quiet reading areas now provide children with valuable space in which to work independently. Assessment procedures are now excellent and help staff to check that every child makes very good gains in their learning.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

**Children's achievement is excellent**, an improvement on the broadly average standards seen in the last inspection. The majority of children now leave at levels that are above those expected for four-year-olds in all the six areas of learning, namely, personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

Children enter the school with well below average attainment. Achievement is excellent and the majority work very effectively towards the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> they are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception Year in their next school). Children's personal and social development is excellent because of the high emphasis placed on this aspect of learning. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is very good because they are provided with a rich range of experiences in and out of the school. More capable children are very well challenged and a small number attain the early learning goals within their time in the school in their personal and social development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In all other areas of learning, children attain standards that are above the expected levels at this age. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language make excellent progress because planning is very thorough.

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<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals are a set of standards, which, it is expected most children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six different areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

**Children's personal development is excellent** and is supported very effectively by the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They enjoy school, form excellent relationships and have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is outstanding. They are very kind and caring towards each other and there is an atmosphere of perfect calm and harmony throughout the day. Children's attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is excellent. Teaching is very good overall and much of it is often excellent.** Learning is very effective because teachers provide interesting and challenging work and make activities fun. They work hard to check that every child is fully included in all activities. Excellent support is given to children who need extra attention. A very high percentage speak little or no English when they first start at the school. Bilingual staff are used to maximum effect in supporting children new to English. Help with other languages that the staff do not speak is sought from parents or other members of the community. Very occasionally, staff provide children with too much help through translation and this stops those who are more capable from practising their English. In some activities, staff direct children too much and do not always give them the time they need to respond. Assessment procedures are excellent and the information about children's progress is very accurately used to match work to their needs. Children love learning and work hard to succeed. The curriculum and opportunities to enrich the provision, through visits and visitors to the school, are excellent. The school places a very high emphasis on healthy eating and keeping fit and takes the well being of children very seriously in all its provision.

The school takes excellent care of its children and promotes an extremely positive ethos amongst everyone related to the school. Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are all outstanding.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management overall are excellent.** Leadership by the headteacher is outstanding. She is inspirational in the way she encourages and supports staff and this has resulted in a highly effective team. The contribution of other key staff is excellent. Governance is very good. Governors monitor the school's performance very closely in order to set priorities for improvement. They ensure all statutory requirements are met and that the school continues to improve.

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

**Parents** are extremely happy with the school. Many help in school regularly. The information they receive about their children's work is very thorough and provision to consult with them, regarding their child's progress and other matters, is excellent. **Children** are very happy at school and feel loved. They are always eager to attend and reluctant to leave.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**There are no significant areas for improvement.**

**Minor areas the school may wish to consider are:**



- Not translating too much for children who speak other languages so they practise their English more readily.
- Giving children more time to think and respond and not directing them too much in their creative activities.

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

### **Standards achieved by children in the areas of learning**

Children's overall achievement is excellent and overall standards are above those expected for children of their age in all areas of learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent provision results in all children making very good progress in the time they are in the school.
- Children achieve particularly well because staff identify needs early, assess progress regularly and plan specifically for individuals.
- Standards are enhanced by excellent support from parents.

### **Commentary**

1. When children start at the school, for most, their knowledge, skills and understanding are well below the expected levels of children at this age. They have particular difficulties in the areas of personal and social development, communication and early number skills. The very high quality of the provision, especially in these areas, ensures that children make at least good progress, although for most progress is well beyond this. By the time they leave the school, all children achieve at least satisfactory standards and most achieve above this.
2. The majority of children (67 per cent) come from families who do not speak English as the home language so the school is the first place where day-to-day communications take place in English. This is a great challenge that is well understood by the staff. The school has appointed several members of staff who speak the home languages of many of the children and this is extremely helpful in settling these children when they first start and in supporting them whilst they are at early stages of learning English. Where children speak languages not represented in the staff, the school turns to parents and members of the community for support. As a result, most of these children keep up with their classmates and make very good gains in their learning. A significant number of children attain high standards in all areas of learning and overall achievement is excellent.

3. Children with special educational needs make good progress and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is due to staff identifying and assessing their needs as early as possible. Staff use assessment meticulously and make individual learning plans that have clear targets and are very carefully monitored. These children are supported well by the Special Needs Co-ordinator who has additional training in special educational needs.
4. Achievement in children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. The school gives this area a very strong emphasis, teaching is clear and consistent and this raises standards. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible and they quickly learn to look after their personal needs. Staff insist on good behaviour and if children go wrong, staff explain why the behaviour is wrong and what to do to put it right. School rules are very few, but they are clearly conveyed to parents and children, and parents' co-operation is sought, to ensure that these rules are followed. All this contributes to standards being above expected levels in this area.
5. In communication, language and literacy, achievement is excellent and standards are above the expected levels for the majority of children, including many who are new to English. A current priority for the school is to improve opportunities for speaking, and this is helping to raise standards. Parental support of early reading and an excellent book and activity loan scheme also help to raise standards.
6. Standards in mathematics are above expected levels and children's achievement is very good. Staff break down learning into small, achievable steps and this is particularly helpful to this area of learning where children's initial experiences are sometimes very limited. Key skills, such as accurate counting, are clearly and regularly taught and practised in a variety of contexts.
7. Standards are above the expected levels in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Their achievement in this area of learning is excellent because provision is excellent and they experience a rich and varied programme of activities that captivate their interest. Standards in ICT have greatly improved since the last inspection, mainly due to the purchase of extremely good resources. Children now have many very good opportunities to use technology to support their learning and this is driving standards up. Children happily practise early reading, writing and number skills on the computer and the interactive whiteboard.
8. Standards in other areas of learning are above what is normally expected of children of this age. Children's physical skills and their knowledge of how to keep healthy are good, as are their skills in drawing, painting, model and music-making.

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

**Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent.** Other aspects of personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are also excellent. Attendance is satisfactory overall.

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

- Children have excellent attitudes to learning because lessons are interesting and fun.

- The promotion of good relationships, including racial harmony, is excellent and children model their behaviour on the excellent examples set by staff.
- Children respond very positively and confidently to the high expectations placed upon them.
- Children have a high regard for the needs of others and their personal development is excellent.

## **Commentary**

9. Walbrook Nursery School is a special place in the lives of its children. There is a strong sense of harmony, respect and care. Staff have high expectations of all the children and children show immense maturity in the way they respond to these expectations. From the moment they arrive, children feel valued and welcome. Because of this very accommodating atmosphere, children settle quickly even though parents are encouraged to stay for the first fifteen minutes of the day to explore what their children will be doing. The excellent example staff set helps children develop positive attitudes to learning, form excellent relationships and learn to respect the needs of others. Children learn to be self-assured and confident and love attending school, in their eagerness to explore new activities and exciting challenges. They show a real sense of awe and delight in everything that is new to them. For example, many were totally thrilled by the 'bubble machine', and watched the phenomenon with real fascination. Children talk excitedly about the games and activities provided for them. For example, in the excellent outside quiet reading area, there is a toy frog that croaks. One child showed an inspector how to make it croak and then laughed delightedly as if it was some special surprise.
10. Children are exceptionally interested in their learning and talk confidently about their activities. They work together extremely well, and are very kind, polite and willing to take turns. The school has very high expectations for children's behaviour. It shares the behaviour policy and expectations of high standards of behaviour at the meeting for parents new to the school. This effective involvement of parents from the outset results in children's behaviour being outstanding. Children understand the issues of right and wrong behaviour and many are quick to correct each other's minor misdemeanours.
11. Children who have special educational needs and those who are new to English have the same positive attitudes as their friends. The few who are sometimes hesitant initially are supported so effectively that they soon feel totally involved in all that is going on. They form excellent friendships and the more able and more fluent English speakers are quick to encourage others to feel secure and part of everything.
12. The provision for children's personal, spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. This is because it is very effectively planned for and takes place across all areas of learning.
13. Staff value children's ideas and encourage them to develop feelings and ideas and share these with others. Whatever they offer is highly praised so that children know they are important and accepted. Children develop values and beliefs and a real sense of curiosity, trusting their teachers implicitly when being presented with new experiences. The school's very diverse population is a cause for celebration and every special occasion creates a 'party' atmosphere, so that children learn to show respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs. Children's appreciation of their

own and others' cultural traditions is excellent. The school celebrates the rich diversity of cultures and the religious festivals of all the major religions. Visits to a variety of places of worship play a very important part in increasing their understanding of and respect for differences. They take care of their fish and their plants and learn to tend living things lovingly. For example, children gently handle the fish while the water is changed taking care not to worry or frighten them as they are netted and placed in freshwater buckets.

14. All staff are highly effective role models in showing how children need to be warm and caring towards each other and this helps children understand why everyone is important. They are careful to take turns and share food and toys as they move from one activity to the next. They are regularly reminded to take full responsibility for themselves and their own actions and all are very good at tidying away and offering help to keep their school tidy and clean. They have a very mature and excellent understanding of moral issues. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent and children's social development is excellent. Children like and trust all the staff and are confident in asking for help if they need it. They also undertake jobs and responsibilities readily, for example helping to move tables and setting out drinks at lunchtimes.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2004-2005 (86%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	14.0	School data	0

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

15. Children are very enthusiastic about attending school. However, despite the school's best efforts, a small but significant number of families take extended holidays to visit relatives abroad. Punctuality is very good.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education is excellent.** Teaching and learning are very good. The curriculum is excellent as is enrichment and all children are fully included in all that the school provides. Arrangements for children's care and welfare are excellent and there are very good arrangements to take their views into account. The school has forged excellent partnerships with parents, other schools and the community.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Overall, teaching and learning throughout the school are **very good**. Assessment procedures are **excellent** and inform planning very effectively.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Assessment procedures are rigorous and ensure teachers plan work to match the needs of every child very effectively.
- Overall achievement is excellent because work is interesting and fun.
- Because staff have very high expectations, children learn very effectively.
- Children with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language receive excellent attention.
- Teachers make excellent use of support staff and the help from parents is highly appreciated.
- Opportunities for children to work independently are promoted well.

- Occasionally, staff provide too much help in children’s home languages and this limits their progress.

**Commentary**

16. Teaching and learning are very good, resulting in children’s excellent achievement. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Children make very good gains in their learning because teaching is carefully thought through and well structured. Teachers present very inviting activities that engage children’s interest and enthusiasm for learning and exploring. A high number of children are hesitant in their speaking and general communication skills when they start in the school, and many are not always good at interacting with others. Staff recognise these issues and spend time and energy working hard to involve these children, so that they participate fully in all that is available to them. Excellent use is made of all additional support staff and volunteers to ensure children of all abilities make very good progress, especially those with special educational needs and those new to English. Strengths in teaching include the very high expectations that teachers place on children to behave well, enjoy themselves and try hard. Explanations and instructions are made very clear, work is challenging and children are guided through the sessions very efficiently and effectively. Both parents and children are extremely appreciative of the work staff do and children form excellent relationships with all the adults in the school as well as other children

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5	3	4	4	0	0	0

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

17. Teachers present children with very well organised activities, visits out and trips that often include whole family groups so that family members who contribute to the children’s learning very effectively share the learning experience. For example, trips to the seaside are a community event and, for many children, such events are their initiation into a wider world. Staff use a wide range of ‘hands on’ approaches so that children learn through their experiences. Teachers have excellent understanding of the curriculum for children of this age and of how young children develop skills and understanding. They ask challenging, open-ended questions and set children problems to solve. Resources are selected very carefully to ensure they fulfil the tasks, and equipment and apparatus are very carefully designed to match individual children’s needs. For example, the ‘light table’ has been specially crafted to support children with visual impairment and the all-weather outside play area is a major source of delight and fascination, in that teachers provide new and exciting thrills, such as the ‘bubble machine’ that children watched with cheerful delight.
18. Teaching has clear purpose and direction and children are continually reminded of previous learning so that they make better sense of the world around them and of their achievements. Children have many very good opportunities to work independently and find out for themselves information they can share with others, for example the ‘building site’ and the road layouts help children become aware of issues related to their health and safety. During snack times, children engage in discussions with staff regarding healthy eating and children as young as three know that some foods have vitamins in them and that fruits and vegetables are good for them. These relaxed discussions help children form secure relationships and trust of others.

19. Support staff are deployed very effectively to help individual or groups of children. All staff have the expertise to observe and measure children's progress and design activities that extend their learning. Lower-attaining children and those with special educational needs are identified very early on and are helped very sensitively in order to participate fully. Because the school has a very high number of children who do not speak English when they first start school, very highly skilled multi-lingual staff help these children access all that is asked of them so that they can participate fully. Occasionally these members of staff step in too soon with translations into the home language and, because some children are more confident in this language, they do not always have sufficient opportunity to practise their English.
20. Children confidently settle to their activities. Very occasionally, a small number lose interest and move on to other things that attract their attention, but during the week, staff check what each one has done and gently steer them to the activities which encourage and support independent learning. Children are so keen to learn and achieve success that they are not reluctant to 'have a go' and confidently seek help and guidance from the range of adults or volunteer helpers in the school. Children happily join in with others, rarely seeking out special friends, but showing more interest in the activities that attract their attention. They watch and learn from the way adults work with them and follow their excellent examples in being kind and caring towards each other. For children of this age, they show high levels of maturity.
21. Assessment strategies are extremely thorough and teachers use the information they gather to identify how well each child has achieved and what steps they need to take to improve further. They talk to children continually, checking their understanding and offering guidance as to how to achieve more. Comments are well constructed and carefully guide children into making the required improvements. Teachers keep very detailed records on each child and discuss this information on a daily basis so that subsequent work is appropriately modified. They regularly share the information they gather with children and parents and, in this way, high achievement is realised. The school values, very highly, the help parents give to their children's learning.

### **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum and provision for out-of-school activities that enrich children's learning are **excellent**. Accommodation and resources are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children of all abilities and backgrounds have excellent access to all that the school provides.
- Provision for their personal, social and health education is outstanding.
- The curriculum is organised meticulously so that every child successfully builds on what they already know, step by step.
- An excellent range of visitors, visits and other learning experiences enrich children's learning very effectively.
- Maximum use is made of the good accommodation, and learning resources are used very effectively to support learning.

### **COMMENTARY**

22. The school provides a rich and vibrant curriculum that meets the needs of every child successfully. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The key issue

identified at that time - the need for a quiet corner for children to read and browse through books alone - has been addressed effectively with the new library and the outside memorial garden. Teachers provide excellent guidance to support staff as to how to help children build successfully on previous work in all areas of learning. Every child has an individual learning plan and this often means some children are guided to some areas of learning more than others to make sure they experience activities that encompass the full range of provision. The curriculum is structured very creatively; for example, in the children's investigations of how plants grow, a trip to some local allotments gave them a real insight into the fact that tomatoes grow on plants before they appear in the shops. In addition, children cultivate their own little garden frequently digging up recently planted seeds to check they are growing and flooding others because they know plants need water to grow.

23. Careful consideration is given to check that the needs of every child are fully met. Children with special educational needs are identified early and individual learning plans are put together so they progress step by step confidently. This results in their high achievement. Similarly, the school has a very high percentage of children learning English as a new language and with three multilingual staff and numerous volunteer helpers, the school successfully accommodates their needs. External help is sought where necessary to supplement what the school can provide from within its resources.
24. There is a high emphasis given to the development of children's personal, social and health education, including focus on daily physical activity and healthy eating. Because a number of children have significant health issues, the focus on healthy lifestyles is a priority and the school works closely with the health care professionals who visit the school to address children and their parents at regular intervals. For example, children have fruit, brown bread and milk at snack times and a visit from the dentist is a regular feature in the provision. Other visitors include representatives from the emergency services, so that children and parents are made aware of health and safety issues that impact on their daily lives.
25. The school's population is very diverse in its mix of minority ethnic groups and the school promotes the values and traditions of other cultures very effectively. Links with the local community are very well established and parents and other visitors are eager to support the children's learning by contributing to the curriculum wherever possible. For example, children have visited a range of places of worship, hairdressing salons serving different minority ethnic groups, and restaurants and cafes that represent cuisine from many countries. These visits promote very effectively their awareness of the world in which they live.
26. Staffing is generous. All staff are highly qualified and have the required expertise to meet children's needs fully. The accommodation is good and very well maintained. The outside area is small but very well laid out for outdoor play. Murals, displays and water features in the quiet area have all been created imaginatively to capture children's attention. The space to run about and climb is limited but staff have developed the area well in that it is fully used in all weather conditions. The newly added library /conservatory is an attractive feature which gives children the space to explore books and develop a love of reading. Resources are plentiful, of very good quality, and many have been built to the school's individual specification because staff have thought carefully about what they are to be used for. For example, the light table is there for all children to benefit from but specifically, it has been designed to attract children with visual impairment. Similarly the fish are housed in a low-level water container so children can observe them readily and assist in cleaning and feeding them. Many items such as book bags, toys and jigsaws are available for parents to borrow for their children to work at home.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

**Procedures for ensuring children's care, welfare, health and safety are excellent.** The support, advice and guidance the school gives to its children are very good. Staff listen and respond extremely sensitively to any concerns expressed by children.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide an excellent level of care in every aspect of the school's activities.
- Child protection procedures are excellent.
- Support for children learning English as a new language is excellent, helping them make very good progress.
- Parents appreciate the excellent arrangements the school makes for children new to the school.

### **Commentary**

27. The school provides an environment that is very safe and supportive. Children's well-being is of high priority and every effort is made to meet each child's individual needs successfully. Children form excellent and trusting relationships with all staff and know they will be listened to, whatever their need or home language. Comprehensive arrangements for child protection are in place. All staff understand child protection procedures fully and work very effectively with parents and other agencies to safeguard children's welfare. Risk assessment and health and safety matters are given a high priority and this ensures correct action is taken to eliminate or minimise hazards within and beyond the school's environment. The school promotes healthy lifestyles very effectively throughout the provision, and procedures for first aid and children's individual health needs are exemplary.
28. The provision for supporting children whose home language is not English is excellent. All staff know the children and their families well because home visits take place prior to the children starting at the school. Several staff speak the same language as the children and where this is not the case, parents and other community members are called upon to lend their support so that every child is well catered for. This high level of support, together with home visits, plays a very important and effective part in the school's efforts to ensure children settle well. Any individual problems are identified and addressed early so that they can learn effectively.
29. The excellent induction procedures ensure all children soon get used to routines and enjoy coming to the school. A meeting for parents who are new to the school is very well structured, with clear guidelines as to what the school expects from parents and this ensures an effective partnership from the outset. Parents receive very clear detailed information and parents are highly appreciative of all the time and trouble staff take to address their concerns and queries.
30. Careful tracking and monitoring ensures that all children receive very good advice that contributes extremely well to their personal development and academic progress. Children have targets that are discussed with them and their parents at the termly meetings that all parents attend. Children have an individual learning plan, and information regarding their academic and personal development is excellent. This means any specific matters that relate to children with special educational needs or those learning English are very quickly acted upon, particularly if support from specialist agencies is required.



31. Great importance is given to providing children with choices and listening to their concerns. Children work in small language groups and there is a space in weekly planning sheets to record children's ideas and suggestions. These are then used effectively in their learning. For example, a photo of a new arrival to a family was used very effectively to stimulate discussion.

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

Links with parents, the local community and other schools are all **excellent**. The school is held in very high regard in the area.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has established excellent links with parents and these make a significant contribution to their children's learning.
- Support for parents of children learning English as a new language is excellent.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive.
- Excellent links with other schools benefit children's learning.
- The school makes excellent use of the community as a learning resource.
- Parents receive excellent levels of information about school activities, children's standards and their progress.

### **Commentary**

32. The school works in very close partnership with all the parents to make sure the needs of every child are met very effectively. Parents have very positive views of the school and the way in which it helps their children to learn and develop as individuals. As one parent commented during the inspection: "My child comes home every day having learnt something new".
33. All parents are encouraged to come into school and take an active part in their children's education and many of them do this. Most parents are well involved in the day-to-day life of the school and keep a close eye on their children's progress. This is especially beneficial for children with special educational needs as work undertaken at school can be reinforced at home. Very clear records are kept of meetings with parents and of any agreements about supporting children at home.
34. Bilingual staff are used very effectively in the support of parents and families so that everyone works to provide the best for each child. Staff make themselves readily available to discuss any worries or concerns. Parents value the fact that aspects of their home culture feature in the day-to-day life of the school. For example, displays, welcome messages and other important information are presented in many languages. Very informative newsletters in different languages are sent home each term and parents also receive 'sharing and learning' sheets, action rhymes and song-sheets that they can use to reinforce learning at home. The high quality books, games and toys that are available for children and parents to borrow helps the school promote learning at home. The home-school partnership is an excellent link that underpins the highly effective work the school does.
35. Links with the community are excellent. The community is a rich resource that enhances the curriculum and children's learning opportunities. The school organises a wide range of visits for children and many visitors from the community regularly help out regularly. For example, children are taken to a mosque, the cathedral and a Hindu

temple. This is part of the school's programme to develop children's knowledge and mutual respect for the diverse cultures and religions in the area. The school is outstandingly successful in this respect. Very good relationships with the predominantly African-Caribbean church, 'All Nations for Christ', directly opposite the school exist. It offers its facilities for a mothers' and toddler group and other school events. The school also organises family excursions so that children experience some of the delights of places like the seaside in the company of their families as well as their school friends. Such opportunities strengthen relationships and add to the popularity the school enjoys and benefit children in the school.

36. The school has developed an impressive range of links with other schools and colleges. These links significantly enhance learning opportunities for children and enable staff to share expertise with others. Because of its high standing in the area, the school has considerable input into training new teachers and the innovation of new practice. As a result, children benefit from additional adult support. The school also works closely and effectively with the cluster of inner-city Nursery, infant and primary schools, developing shared policy and good practice. Links with partner primary schools are so well established that children move on very smoothly to the next phase of their education.

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

**There is a strong commitment to involving all parents fully in the education of their children and all parents take their responsibilities very seriously.** Parents are valued from the time they register their interest in the school and are invited to a range of events to familiarise themselves with the school. Mothers and toddlers sessions run by the school prepare children extremely well by giving them a very good introduction to school. The whole ethos of the school hinges upon the warmth and mutual respect staff share with families, joining in each other's festivals, celebrations and cultural events. Parents trust staff and often confide in them, knowing they will receive individual attention no matter what the issue they have. Important strategies include the termly one-to-one meetings with their child's key-worker to share and contribute towards the targets for learning for the following term.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management of the school are **excellent**. The leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff are **excellent**. The governance of the school is **very good** and all statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a strong vision and purpose, with a very clear focus on raising achievement.
- Excellent management structures and procedures underpin the every day work of the school and have contributed significantly to the impressively high standards.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are excellent.
- The headteacher has created an effective team of staff and provides excellent opportunities for their professional development.
- The expertise and contribution of governors are very good.
- Financial management is very good.

### **Commentary**

37. The visionary and innovative leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She provides very clear and highly effective leadership, and conveys a strong desire to secure the very best for her children, her staff and the school. She drives improvement and is totally focused on

providing the best education possible for the children who attend the school. An excellent senior management team assists her very ably. As a consequence, the headteacher has very successfully established a united and very supportive staff team. This is a school where every child really does matter because everyone is committed to making excellent provision for the academic and personal development of all children. The school promotes a real enthusiasm for learning and a strong caring ethos in a school community where everyone is highly valued. High expectations by staff, parents and governors underpin the clear focus on raising achievement. Children are central to everything the school does and every effort is made to meet their individual needs.

38. The senior management team, led by the teaching staff, is very effective in identifying innovative approaches to school and curriculum development. For example, excellent partnerships with parents, the community and other schools provide staff with opportunities to widen the experiences they offer children and maximise teaching and learning time. Although children attend only part time, the provision is densely packed with a rich variety of opportunities that no child, or their parents, want to miss out on.
39. Staff have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and carry these out diligently. They are all very effectively involved in monitoring and evaluating provision and contributing to improvements. Staff provide excellent role models for each other, the children and the parents who play an integral role in the school's success. They are also very actively involved in developing provision for children under five in other schools. There are very clear procedures for the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's performance through the analysis and interpretation of a range of information. From these processes, both formal and informal, plans and objectives are established and a detailed school improvement plan is drawn up which effectively secures further improvement. Agreed timescales and responsibilities, together with identified targets for improvement, involve all staff and governors in the raising achievement effectively.
40. The management of the school is excellent. The deployment of support staff is particularly effective in meeting the needs of all children, but particularly those who need additional support in learning English, thus ensuring high achievement for all. The management of special educational needs provision throughout the school is excellent. The school's excellent work across many fronts has been recognised in its gaining a number of national awards, including School Achievement Awards in 2000, 2001 and 2002. The school is currently working towards the Health Promoting Schools Award. In 2000 it was listed in HMCI's Annual Report as a school achieving excellence for its children and became a Beacon School. Since then, it has disseminated good practice across the city and in other authorities. The school has developed excellent links with a number of outside bodies and these connections have enabled many innovations. Arrangements for professional development of all staff are excellent. Performance management is used well to guide and inform staff developments required within the school.
41. There are very clear procedures in place to enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis, thanks to the very effective administrative and financial support. Very effective self-evaluation procedures are instrumental in identifying which initiatives are the most effective and where resources need to be deployed to have the maximum impact. For example, the school is exploring how to reinstate the provision for the 'mothers and toddlers' group on the school premises in order to prepare children even more effectively for their start in the school. Meanwhile, the school has established this provision in the nearby church hall so that some preparation is still possible.

42. Governance is very good, with some excellent features. The most significant is that the governing body took up the challenge of a devolved budget for the first time in 2004 and has managed it successfully in this short time. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They have represented the school at public meetings where critical decisions have had to be made regarding provision in the local area. The governors support the headteacher and her staff very effectively and provide appropriate levels of challenge and accountability. Governors are kept very well informed about the school's work and the steps being taken to make improvements. They are involved in the school's strategic planning and many are frequent visitors to the school during the day.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	299,148	Balance from previous year	6,457
Total expenditure	275,083	Balance carried forward to the next year	30,522
Expenditure per pupil	7,053		

43. The management of the school's finances is excellent. The funds are used well to secure additional resources and to initiate significant improvements to the buildings and the grounds. The headteacher has been very successful in attracting funding and support from the wider community, to promote improvements to the accommodation such as the building of the new classroom. The current carry-forward figure is earmarked for agreed priorities for improving accommodation, identified in the school improvement plan. The school has appropriate procedures in place to ensure that it successfully applies the principles of best value to all aspects of its work. In light of the broadly average spend per child and their excellent personal development and overall high achievement, the school gives very good value for money.

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

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

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **excellent**.

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

- High emphasis is placed on this area; consequently, children make excellent progress.
- Activities are engaging and well planned, resulting in children's attention being captured and maintained.
- Staff insist on high standards of behaviour, so children behave well.
- Children feel valued and secure because staff are caring and affectionate.

#### **Commentary**

44. Teaching and learning and, as a consequence achievement, are excellent in this area. Many children enter school with skills that are well below those normally expected at this age. By the time they leave, almost all achieve standards that are well above expected levels and this is excellent progress. Children make this progress because this area of learning is a very high priority. Staff identify and assess children's learning needs early and accurately. They use information from assessment to inform

children's individual learning plans and identify targets which focus their teaching. They discuss children's progress regularly and enlist the help of parents, so work at school and at home interlock very well. This increases children's rate of progress. These strategies are particularly helpful for children with special educational needs and those learning English as a new language and these children also make excellent progress.

45. Teachers' expertise is excellent and the provision for children's personal development is rich in first-hand experiences. The well-thought-out activities invite children to participate from the moment they arrive and children are immediately immersed in these explorations. Many children rush into school at the beginning of sessions, obviously eager and excited to explore. They show interest and are responsive to learning, often maintaining attention and concentration for significant periods of time. Parents and members of the community are invited to join some activities and this makes the curriculum more real and relevant to children.
46. Staff care for children very well. They show affection and take an interest in children's lives outside of school. This results in children gaining confidence and being willing to separate from their parents. Children feel safe, show trust in the adults and develop a strong sense of belonging in the school. Staff praise and encourage children constantly, so children's confidence and their sense of worth grow. Relationships are harmonious and staff and children are relaxed and friendly with each other. Children work willingly as part of a group; they take turns, share fairly and successfully learn appropriate school behaviour. Staff consistently expect good behaviour. Children quickly learn right and wrong and begin to understand the need for rules.
47. Children start school at various stages of looking after themselves, but they all successfully learn to manage their personal hygiene. Drinks and snacks are available all the time and children learn to take these when they need them, successfully pouring their own drinks and clearing away the things they have used. Some children stay to lunch and widen their experience and enjoyment of food and the company of other children and adults. These exchanges enhance their knowledge of, and respect for, others from different cultural backgrounds and they are very well adjusted to social occasions.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

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

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

- Children listen attentively and respond well to all they are asked to do.
- Staff provide very good opportunities for children to develop the skills needed for handwriting.
- Enthusiasm for reading is extremely well fostered and children love stories and rhymes.
- At times, opportunities for children to explain what they are doing and thinking are not as well used as they might be.
- Occasionally children receive too much bilingual support and as a result, opportunities for practising their English are reduced.

## Commentary

48. Standards in this area are above expected levels. This is due to a clear focus on language acquisition, thorough planning and careful monitoring of progress. The majority of children enter the school with very little and often no English, therefore to reach this standard, achievement is excellent.
49. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff ensure that children settle down and are quiet before they start to speak and this develops children's listening skills and increases the likelihood of them understanding spoken language. Children listen very carefully and the majority show, by their answers, that they have understood. Children at an early stage of learning English are well supported by several bilingual staff who translate key points in lessons. These members of staff focus very well on key words and instructions, thus enabling children to succeed and build up confidence. Occasionally, however, the more capable children are not given the extra challenge they need to practise their English without the supplied translation. Generally, staff ask good questions that encourage children to think and extend their powers of expression, but at times questioning is insufficiently challenging and staff do not wait long enough for children to respond.
50. Staff read stories very well, capturing children's interest and stimulating their enthusiasm for reading. Very often, reading is an individual experience, with children clearly relishing the close relationship with staff that this brings. Staff focus children's attention well on key characters and incidents in books and they ask some good questions. Since the last inspection, the school has provided a delightful outdoor reading area and children use this frequently in their free choice time, often snuggling into one of the 'beanies' with a book. Several children were observed 'reading' their favourite books to their toy characters. Children love to pore over the really appealing books provided, that are well illustrated, with 'pop-ups', flaps, tabs and other features.
51. Children have many opportunities to develop hand-eye co-ordination and this enables them to develop their handwriting. Their drawings become increasingly detailed and expressive. They practise writing patterns and write their names, generally forming the letters correctly. More able children successfully copy captions to explain their drawings. In role-play they pretend to write such things as shopping lists, telephone messages, or café orders. They make 'little books' that re-tell familiar story and thus develop creative ideas to act out in their role-play activities. Resources such as the computers, the 'Smart Board' and large whiteboard greatly enhance provision in this area. Children with special educational needs make good progress and achieve standards that are at least in line with expectations.

## Mathematical development

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from regular and systematic practice in counting and recognising numbers.
- A wide range of activities develops children's understanding of shape, space and measures.
- Essential mathematical methods, such as 'touch and count', are not always as well taught as they should be and this results in some children not counting accurately.

### **Commentary**

52. Children's skills in this area of learning are well below average when they start at the school, but by the time they leave, standards for many are above what is generally expected for their age and this is very good achievement. Staff make careful assessments of what children have learned and ensure subsequent learning is carefully matched to individual needs. This approach is particularly beneficial to children with special educational needs who need carefully structured steps in their learning. These children progress well and achieve standards that are at least in line with expectations. Children who need help in their home language are carefully guided so that their achievement is very good.
53. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan regular practice in using numbers for counting, and the majority of children already count to five, with some counting well beyond that number. Higher-attaining children are well challenged in activities, such as counting the number of children present and compiling the calendar each day. Most children effectively use simple mathematical methods, such as 'touch and count' to attain accuracy, although these are not consistently taught as well as they should be. Regular practice is enhanced with rhymes, games and stories that focus on numbers and add interest and enjoyment. Mathematical ideas such as adding and taking away are developed in these activities, which are often very well linked to topic work. For example, in the current theme, 'Food', the idea of addition is practised in 'One potato, two potatoes, three potatoes, four' and the idea of taking away in 'Five Little Peas in a Peapod Pressed'. The repetitive practice and systematic build up of skills enables children who are very new to English to achieve well.
54. Teachers capitalise on day-to-day opportunities to develop mathematical ideas in activities across the curriculum. For example, in role-play, children visit the shop and café with price lists, imitation coins, a realistic till and a calculator and adults show children how to use these as they play. Similarly, in craftwork, they teach the names of two- and three-dimensional shapes as children make collages and models. In handwriting practice and printing, children develop the idea of mathematical patterns.

### **Knowledge and understanding**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide variety of activities stimulate children's interest in the world around them.
- Parents, the local community and the environment are used well and make a positive contribution to children's learning.
- Resources for ICT are excellent and support learning effectively.

### **Commentary**



55. The majority of children enter school with very limited experience of the world around them, but by the time they leave, they achieve standards that are well above those expected of children of this age and this is excellent achievement. This gain is due to a rich and exciting programme of activities that is enhanced by visits, visitors and very good resources.
56. Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers select a broad and relevant range of topics and plan imaginative and exciting activities that capture children's interest and motivate them to learn. Parents and members of the local community are used very well, for example to cook a variety of cultural foods with the children, to join in visits and learn from a variety of visitors. The environment is also well used to extend children's awareness of their responsibility to care for living things and the world in which they live. The school serves an ethnically diverse community and staff use this as a key resource to help children to understand their own cultures and beliefs and as well as those of others. Visits to places of interest are often open to other family members and this helps staff promote children's learning more effectively because their parents can reinforce the learning at home.
57. During activities, staff ask many questions and this arouses children's curiosity, so they want to know why things happen and how things work. For example, in cleaning out the fish, the teacher began the questioning, then children followed, asking pertinent questions and thinking about what the answers might be. Children talk about past events in their lives, developing their understanding of the changes brought about by time. They observe the weather and note changes in the seasons in their gardens at home and at school. They identify features of their environment, such as key buildings and the small creatures that live in their gardens. Their fascination in watching plants grow was further enriched by their visit to the local allotments where they discovered how to use a range of garden tools to plant different vegetables.
58. Since the last inspection, technological resources have been greatly improved and this has made this area up-to-date and exciting. Children use the computers enthusiastically, successfully operating the mouse to control icons on the screen. They draw with their fingers on the 'Smart Board' and wait eagerly to see their work printed. They play with technological toys, operating switches, and buttons and push pads expertly and in great anticipation.

### **Physical development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very good opportunities to use a broad range of tools and equipment.
- The focus on healthy eating enhances children's knowledge of how to keep healthy.
- Relaxing and cooling down is sometimes missed from lessons.

### **Commentary**

59. Although space is limited, it is very well organised and effectively used, so teaching and learning are very good. All children make very good progress in the development of control of large and small movements and reach above average standards for children of their age. Children with special needs and those who are new to English

do at least as well as their peers and, at times, better because they enjoy such opportunities so much more. Overall achievement is very good.

60. Through a good variety of well-chosen activities, children learn to move safely and with confidence. For example, outside, they climb and slide, use pedal and push toys and build with large bricks. They develop awareness of safety issues through wearing crash helmets and hard hats. They also develop awareness of space and others, and there were no crashes or bumps into each other, either accidentally, or on purpose, although the outside space is quite limited. Indoors, children successfully use tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and glue spreaders and are very good at taking time over their projects. They patiently assemble jigsaws, thread beads, interlock plastic bricks and use their hands to shape dough, thus developing a good sense of working methodically.
61. Keeping healthy is currently a focus in the school and most children know what is good for them to eat and what is not good. Sensible snacks such as fruit and vegetables are made available to the children and they understand why these are better for them than sweet biscuits. Many choose fresh fruit for lunch in preference to cakes and puddings. They also know that they should drink water regularly and this is available to them at all times. Sun hats are provided and children explain why they should always wear these when it is sunny. Some children explain the effect of exercise on the body. But opportunities to illustrate this as children actually exercise are not as well used as they could be. For example, relaxing and cooling-down procedures are occasionally missed out after exercise.

### **Creative development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very good opportunities to explore a range of media and materials.
- Resources for music are very good and enhance children's learning very effectively.
- Occasionally children are directed too much in their work by supporting adults.

### **Commentary**

62. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Staff have a thorough understanding of children's need to explore and experiment with materials before they can express their ideas, and children have very good opportunities to do this. By the end of their time in the school, they reach above expected standards. As most children enter with below average skills in this area, this is very good achievement.
63. Staff provide excellent opportunities for children to make things and children cut out and glue together such things as paper, card and textile scraps to make pictures, simple models and gifts. They have many opportunities to make marks and develop drawing as a means of expression. The new 'Smart Board' is an excellent resource for getting children started in this and they also use pencils, crayons, chalks and paint. Children's drawings are usually about their families and personal experiences and, with good praise and encouragement from teachers, these gradually become more detailed and expressive. They show high levels of interest and effort as they concentrate on refining details. Children's paintings are colourful, rich and vibrant,

showing how they spread and swirl paint as they explore colours and brush strokes. Older and more able children draw recognisable things, such as people and houses, and they develop their ability to colour in carefully to enhance their work. As they work with play dough, they roll, squeeze and shape with their hands, exploring what they can do with this medium. In water and sand they pour, fill, empty, swish and trail about as they experiment with texture, creating noises that change depending on the toys they introduce to the water. Sand play is popular and the huge sandpit is a source of great attraction, as they shape and build and watch the flow of sand through different-sized sieves.

64. The school has built up a very good collection of resources for music and children explore how sounds are made and changed. For example, several children were observed trailing their fingers across the large outdoor instruments, listening with delight as they made sounds. Staff have an extensive repertoire of action songs and they link songs with topic work very well. They send home song sheets for children to practise and this is helpful for developing children's ability to sing from memory. Children sing tunefully and with great enthusiasm and children learning English as a new language join in very well, singing loudly and energetically. They all enjoy listening and moving to different kinds of music and move in time to beats, for example of a drum in 'Bean Bag Rap'. From time to time, they take part in musical performances.
65. The daily programme of activities always includes opportunities for children to use their imaginations. Resources for role-play are very good and children are encouraged to pretend they are cooks, waitresses, shop assistants, hairdressers, doctors, builders and many other things. Role-play is well used to increase children's knowledge and understanding of different occupations, and also for developing their imaginations. However, it is sometimes over-directed by supporting adults, limiting children's progress particularly in their exploration of language. In less directed activities, children create all sorts of situations. For example, on the building site they were building themselves a new house, on the tricycles they were going to the seaside and in the garden one child sat quietly with her doll telling her a story in her home language.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Childrens' achievement	1
<b>Childrens' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Childrens' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well children learn	2
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets childrens' needs	1

Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Childrens' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for children	1
How well the school seeks and acts on childrens' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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