

# INSPECTION REPORT

## WEST HEATH NURSERY SCHOOL

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103127

Headteacher: Mrs J Burch

Lead inspector: Mr G D Timms

Dates of inspection: 25-27 April 2005

Inspection number: 268225

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 pupils: 3-4  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 69

School address: 200 West Heath Road  
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Birmingham  
West Midlands  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of Mrs D Clayton  
governors:

Date of previous 23 November 1998  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

West Heath Nursery School has 69 pupils; 22 are part time and 47 attend all day. They are organised into six groups which are each given the name of a colour. The children begin school after their third birthday and attend the school for one year. Many have experience of a wide range of other pre-school settings. Although there is a wide range of ability, and this differs from year to year, the overall attainment on entry to the school is well below the typical levels for their ages, especially for their personal, social and emotional development, and their communication and language skills.

The immediate locality has more social and economic disadvantage that is typically found. About 44 per cent of the children have special educational needs, which is very high for a school of this type and size. The main needs are speech and communication, physical difficulties and autism. The great majority of the children are from a white British background. Only two children have a home language other than English and only one of these is at an early stage of learning English. There are no children who are refugees or asylum seekers and no child receives extra funding to provide support to help them with English. The other home languages spoken besides English are Tamil and Tagalog. The school was awarded a Quality Mark by the Basic Skills Agency in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Lead inspector	Mathematical development Physical development Creative development
19320	Mrs B Attaway	Lay inspector	
17208	Mrs G Briggs	Team inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>23</b>

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**The overall effectiveness of the school is very good and it provides very good value for money.** Although standards attained are broadly typical for children of this age, this represents very good achievement and children make very good progress towards the national goals for early learning. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and this helps overcome the barriers to the learning caused by the below average language and social skills many of the children have when they start school. The leadership and management of the school are very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- all children make very good progress and achieve very well;
- the leadership of the school is very good and the headteacher and staff have a clear focus on the importance of children's learning;
- all staff work extremely well together when planning, delivering and assessing children's work; the teaching assistants provide the school with excellent support;
- the children are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes towards school;
- children's personal development is very good;
- the new classroom is underused;
- there are excellent links with parents.

The improvement since the last inspection has been very good, overall. The issues raised at the last inspection included the standards and teaching of children's mathematical development, and the need to make better use of the outdoor resources and improve children's physical development. These issues have been very effectively addressed. The area of learning for mathematics is now better resourced, planned and taught and standards have risen. A lot of work has gone into improving the outdoor resources and accommodation and provision is now very good. The new classroom offers the school more opportunity for physical activities indoors although this is not yet fully used. The school has successfully introduced the Foundation Stage curriculum and has improved its planning assessment and recording of children's progress.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

**Achievement is very good.** Children achieve very well in all areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. They make very good progress, and achieve very well given their well below average attainment on entry to the school, raising standards to broadly average by the time they leave the Nursery. For their creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, their attainment is above that typically found. Their achievement is very good because they experience effective, targeted and well-planned direct teaching. There are no significant differences in achievement apparent between different groups of pupils. Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. **Their behaviour and attitudes to school are very good. Their attendance is good and the majority of the parents are aware of the importance of getting their children to school regularly and on time.**

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of the teaching and learning is very good** and has a very positive impact on achievement. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together, and the support offered by the teaching assistants is excellent. The very good relationships between adults, and between adults and children, help create the very exciting and productive environment, and the

positive learning ethos, in which the children are able to make such good progress. All adults are very caring and work hard to provide a very exciting environment in which children can learn. The planning is very detailed and shared among all staff. The assessment of children's achievements and progress is very good and used very effectively to set individual targets for improvement. The curriculum provided for children is good and there is very good enrichment through visits, and particularly through visitors. The care and support offered children are very good and all adults are very aware of their social, emotional and physical needs. The links with parents and the local community are excellent.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has led the school very effectively through many changes and improvements since the last inspection. The management structure of the school is effective and areas of learning are well led. Very effective school self-evaluation has found that there are insufficient opportunities for staff to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum, both for those coordinating areas of learning or for performance management purposes and the inspectors concur. The governance of the school is satisfactory and developing well since the governing body was formed in 2003. However, the governors still rely heavily on the headteacher for information. They have made a good start on setting and monitoring the newly devolved budget. All relevant statutory requirements are met including those for ensuring racial equality.

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

The parents are very positive about the work of the school. They say their children like school; the school is well led and managed, teaching is good, members of staff are approachable and the communication with the school is very effective. The findings of the inspection support these positive views. The children enjoy school and are very happy to arrive at the start of the day. Discussion with them shows they like the activities provided, especially 'playing with cars', 'painting' and the cornflour mixture activity.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school's self-evaluation is very good and it is identifying relevant aspects for improvement. The most important thing needed for improvement is to continue implementing the school improvement plan effectively.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is very good in all of the nationally agreed areas of learning. Standards on entry to the school are well below average but rise quickly due to the very effective teaching. By the time they transfer to the Reception year standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their creative development are above those normally found, while in the remaining areas of learning standards are broadly typical.

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

- Children achieve very well in all areas of learning.
- Standards are highest in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development.
- Children with special educational needs, or who are more able, achieve as well as their peers.

#### **Commentary**

1. When children start at the school, the early assessment of their attainment shows that many of them have standards well below those expected for their ages. A significant proportion has special educational needs. Particular weaknesses are apparent in children's social and emotional development and their language and literacy skills. Their achievement is very good throughout the school, due to the very good provision, and the vast majority are well prepared for starting in the Reception class in September.
2. Achievement in children's personal, social and emotional development is very good, and this area of learning has a high priority in the school to support children's growing maturity and prepare them for life in their next school. They are instilled with good learning habits and they develop their ability to co-operate, share and negotiate through a range of well-chosen activities. A particular strength is the provision of opportunities for them to become independent through choosing activities and selecting resources. The majority develop skills that are broadly typical given their ages by the time they leave the school.
3. Achievement in children's communication, language and literacy skills is very good and they make very good progress in learning to speak, and with their early reading and writing skills. The majority are on course to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of their Reception year. Where progress is slower, it is due to the high proportion with special educational needs, although given their capability, they also achieve very well. Members of staff provide a wide range of activities that require children to talk, and opportunities to listen to a range of traditional and modern stories.
4. Achievement in children's mathematical development is very good and has improved greatly since the last inspection when it was a significant weakness. The majority are on course to attain the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Children learn about shape, are able to compare and sequence objects by size and colour, and have a growing understanding of numbers and



ordering. Many activities, including regular use of the outdoor facilities, are set up to support mathematical development.

5. Achievement in children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and their creative development, is very good, and the majority are on course to exceed the agreed national goals by the end of the Reception year. These two areas of learning are supported by very strong provision and very effective teaching and together they contribute to the very good progress made. The school is a leader in the local area for the use of information and communication technology with this age group. In addition, the very effective curriculum based around first hand experiences, visits, and visitors, enable children to experience a wide range of exciting and inspiring activities. For example, during the inspection the introduction of newly hatched chicks produced a high level of excitement and interest, as well as creating some real awe and wonder. For their creative development, children are given access to a very wide range of artistic and musical opportunities, and, especially where they are led by adults, these lead to some mature and very imaginative work.
6. Children's physical development has improved since the last inspection, due to the better provision and resources, and their achievement is very good. The standards attained are broadly typical given their ages. The improved outdoor facilities and the new classroom have both led to better opportunities for children to exercise and learn to control their bodies and to use sports equipment and large toys. Their skills in handling smaller apparatus and tools are also very well developed through many of the activities and learning opportunities provided by staff.
7. Children with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning from when they start school. Very good progress is particularly evident in their personal and social development and with speech and language. Some children's needs are more complex and for these children the school receives advice and support from experts outside the school. Staff work hard to follow the advice given and this helps those children to achieve very well. The children needing specific one-to-one teaching are quickly identified and given the support they need to help them become fully integrated into the life of the school. More able children are also well supported, particularly through identified group work, as seen with the mathematics group.

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

The children have very good attitudes, resulting in very good behaviour. Their attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good attitudes and behaviour make an important contribution to the children's very good learning.
- Very good relationships promote their understanding of sharing.
- The children enjoy opportunities to become responsible for their learning.
- Children's moral and social developments are very good; spiritual and cultural developments are good.

### **Commentary**

7. This is a vibrant Nursery where children have a high level of enjoyment. Learning is stimulating and free flow between activities is making a valuable contribution to their personal development and organisational skills. They demonstrate a love of books and excitedly want to share them with visitors, doing so with confidence.
8. All staff act as very good role models and set high expectations to which the children respond with very good behaviour during activities and as they move between tasks. At the start of the autumn term, the Nursery works hard to help a few children understand behaviour expectations. In the playground they share equipment fairly and appreciate the willow tunnel. Any instances of over-exuberance in the playground are dealt with quietly by adults and this emphasises the Nursery's expectations of respect for each other.
9. Although the children are below statutory school age and attendance is not compulsory, it is nevertheless good. It improved when more full time places became available. Parents are very appreciative of the opportunity to send their children to the Nursery. Most of them respond well to the expectation that good attendance is an important contributory factor to how well their children progress and to prepare them for primary school.
10. The children's spiritual awareness is developed well through a sense of awe in the world around them. The environment is used continually to show children the wonders of new life and nature's gifts. For example, this is evident in the look on a child's face as he held a tiny, newborn chick in the palm of his hand; the gentle way children felt the leaves and were amazed by the different smells in the sensory garden.
11. Children's moral and social developments are strengths of the teachings. They understand right from wrong and follow the five simple, yet effective, school rules. Children are developing morally in the way in which they are encouraged to help their friends and their involvement in fund raising for others less fortunate than themselves. Social development takes place in every area of learning. Well-planned opportunities ensure that children work in pairs or in groups and they are encouraged to take responsibility. The way in which children move confidently and independently within the setting is very impressive. They play together co-operatively, for example with the outside equipment and in the 'home corner'.
12. Provision for cultural development is good. Children learn about their own culture from visits to the local church and involvement in Christian festivals. They also learn about other cultures. They enjoyed participating in the dragon dance when learning about the Chinese New Year. Members of staff work hard at introducing children to a good range of other religious celebrations, mounting interesting displays for Diwali, Ramadan and Hanukah. Children are becoming well aware of the diverse society which lies beyond their own immediate experiences.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good, and very effective in supporting achievement.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **very good**. Assessment is very good overall, and used well in planning activities. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, especially in mathematics, and for the outdoor activities.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers and teaching assistants make a very strong and effective team.
- Relationships between staff and children are very strong.
- Assessment is very detailed and well used in setting targets for improvement.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	13	0	0	0	0

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

13. All of the teaching is good or better. In almost a quarter of sessions, it is very good. This very positive picture has improved since the last inspection. The teachers and the teaching assistants work very effectively as a team. The school has a wide range of staff with a variety of skills and experience. They are often supplemented by trainees and students, as well as very useful volunteer helpers, often parents. They provide well for the children with special educational needs and for those who are more able.
14. All the staff plan together and this ensures that they are all aware of the activities to be used, and the learning expected from areas of specific focus. They prepare well for sessions, laying out a wide range of activities and resources, creating an exciting and productive learning environment. The planning is detailed and this has a very good impact on the children's learning. It is based on long-term topic themes, then half-termly plans that ensure good coverage of the appropriate curriculum. These are used to produce more detailed weekly plans that identify the activities to be provided and those that will be a teacher focus, supervised by other adults or available for children to have as free choice.
15. Good use is now made of the outdoor area and this has improved since the last inspection. The planning ensures that outdoors is used not only for physical and social development, but also for mathematical and other activities. A particular strength is the way adults do not simply supervise children but have a direct input into the outdoor activities and children's games so that learning opportunities are not missed.
16. The deployment and the work of the teaching assistants is excellent, especially in developing children's speaking and social skills. Much of the direct teaching based around a focus activity is among small groups of children. This means that there are good opportunities for adults to have good one-to-one time, and sufficient time for interaction between children. This also ensures good use of teachers' time through working with larger groups.
17. The relationships between children and staff are very positive and this has an impact on children's learning. The story group system ensures children have an adult they know and can go to at any time with concerns or questions. All members of staff work very hard, know the children well as individuals, and maintain very effective links with

the parents. Children with English as an additional language are well taught and involved in activities, and records show the good progress they make.

18. All adults have an especially good knowledge of those children who have special educational needs; they are supported very well with excellent links made with parents. All members of staff have a clear overview of the learning taking place and any special educational needs provision is clearly linked to the planning. Detailed individual education plans are drawn up to indicate learning targets, which are appropriate and achievable. Adults use assessment strategies very well to identify individual needs and to support ongoing learning. Children readily turn to an adult for help and work in small groups or individually. They are closely monitored in their regular 'Story Groups' each day. The special needs assistant gives more targeted support for speech and language and communication. Resources used are very good in the way they promote children's interest and help them to communicate ideas and to develop skills. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who is the headteacher, effectively deploys staff and gives them very good support in meeting the needs of those children with specific learning difficulties.
19. The assessment of children's learning and progress is very good. There are very detailed and clear systems for recording the participation of children in activities, and these are used to check on the areas visited less often so that children can be encouraged to go to them. In addition, their progress in literacy and numeracy skills is assessed each term and graphs produced to show how well they progress. Individual children are also monitored and targets set for their future learning. At the end of the year assessment information is shared with parents and with the receiving schools so that all involved are aware of how well children are learning.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good in all six nationally agreed areas of learning. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are very good. The accommodation and resources are very good and used very effectively for the delivery of the curriculum.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum provides a wide range of rich experiences covering all areas of learning.
- The curriculum is very good at meeting the needs of all pupils.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the involvement of visitors and first hand experiences.
- There is a very good range of resources particularly in information and communication technology and science.
- The accommodation, both inside and outside, promotes learning. However, the new 'bungalow' is not yet being used fully.

### **Commentary**

20. The school continues to provide a good, broadly based, well-balanced and rich curriculum as was seen at the time of the last inspection. The members of staff provide very good opportunities and activities which meet the needs of all pupils. For example, purposeful programmes of learning are given to children with special educational needs as well as group mathematics activities planned for the gifted and talented children. This is an improvement from the last inspection, when this differentiation was not clearly available.
21. The school successfully balances the teaching of the curriculum so that children's personal and social development is emphasised more when they first join the Nursery. Once children are well settled, more emphasis is appropriately given to other areas of the curriculum. The cross-curricular approach to the delivery of the curriculum means that skills in communication, language and literacy, as well as in mathematics are developed naturally from a good range of interesting topics. For example, children enjoy talking and writing about mini-beasts, and count the legs on a spider.
22. Visits and visitors very effectively enrich the whole curriculum so that children have a wealth of good quality experiences. They are engrossed when snakes, spiders and giant insects are brought in. They enjoy walking with the rangers from the Lickey Hills, looking for bird and bat nesting boxes, insect homes, plants and trees. They had met earlier in the year with the local postman, librarians and the curate from the local church. All areas of the curriculum are enhanced by experts visiting, such as a music workshop, storytellers and a Life Education Bus for science. These children are provided with a stimulating range of first-hand experiences that broaden their knowledge, stimulate speaking and listening, and excite them. For example, the arrival of three day old chicks promoted curiosity, care and wonder.
23. The members of staff have worked hard to ensure the Nursery environment is of a high quality. The very clearly arranged accommodation is well organised and used effectively. The outside play area has been greatly improved since the last inspection. It provides a wide range of interesting experiences over all the curricular areas, such as the role-play house, physical apparatus and a sensory garden. Members of staff

interact with the children continually. This helps ensure the children are very well supported and that adults are on hand to encourage and support children's learning at all times. The new classroom provides a very good space for many different occasions. However, at present it is not used on a regular basis other than for lunch and more imaginative use could be made of this facility.

24. The Nursery has very good resources that enhance the delivery of all areas of the curriculum. This is particularly evident in information and communication technology. The interactive whiteboard is a stimulating resource used continually by the children. The setting has a number of computers accessible for children at all times. There are robotic toys, digital cameras and video recorders. The Nursery has benefited from the research undertaken on the use of whiteboards in Nursery settings, by acquiring extra resources of a high quality. The science curriculum is supported by imaginative and appropriate resources. The outside has been carefully developed to promote learning about plants and animals.

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

The Nursery is very good in ensuring the children work and play in a very healthy, safe and secure environment. Support, advice and guidance are very good. The Nursery is very good at listening to pupils' views and ideas.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good quality of care raises the children's confidence, self-esteem and pace of learning.
- Assessment is used very effectively to monitor the children's personal development.
- The children feel valued by their views being sought through the annual questionnaire.

### **Commentary**

25. The recently formed governing body has adopted all the necessary health and safety policies, but is yet to formalise procedures for their monitoring. The headteacher has undertaken a detailed audit to ensure that statutory requirements are met. It is detailed and thorough, identifying short, medium and longer-term targets, timescale and funding source; there are regular reviews.
26. Children receive very good care because they are valued as individuals. It is enhanced by whole staff training in child protection. Two members of staff are fully trained in first aid and the Nursery is currently exploring the possibility of paediatric first aid training for all staff and dinner supervisors. Members of staff are rigorous in maintaining records of the use of inhalers for individual children.
27. The importance of a healthy lifestyle is addressed very well through the curriculum and through discussion about the contents of children's lunchboxes when adults sit with them during their lunchtime. Science and physical education are used effectively to discuss exercise and heartbeats. Parents have responded positively to the Nursery's request for only healthy foods to put in lunchboxes and this is supportive.
28. The Nursery is very good at adjusting the induction arrangements to suit each individual child; parents appreciate this. The allocation of a group of children to one member of staff is very supportive. The adult is responsible for the well-being of each

child in the group, completing observations and assessments and liaising with parents on day-to-day issues. Trusting relationships with adults are formed and the children's confidence and feeling of security is developed very well by this high level of care, ensuring they are fully prepared for their move to primary school. A parent wrote, "*West Heath made him feel secure and gave him additional support to give him confidence to be his own person*". Parents praised the staff for visiting the children soon after they start at their primary school. The children's self-esteem is raised by the opportunity to contribute ideas to how the Nursery can develop.

29. The care and guidance of children with special educational needs are very good. Very good records are kept by all adults to record children's achievements. The quality of the records ensures that children's individual education plans are particularly effective in promoting their progress. There is very good liaison with parents and outside experts when drawing up the plans and this helps to ensure the special needs of children are met especially well. The school now intends to analyse the overall progress being made by all the children with special educational needs to establish trends in achievement. This information is not currently available.
30. Assessment is very detailed, enabling individual targets to be set appropriately and monitored by the headteacher. Successes are celebrated by children and parents through the substantial display of work. The Nursery has been especially successful in the use of behaviour targets for individual children, including those with short attention spans. Staff training and consistent strategies throughout the Nursery, combined with individual behaviour plans and very meticulous records, have achieved impressive outcomes.

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

Parent and the community links are excellent. With pre-school groups and other schools, they are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent quality of relationship with parents impacts on every facet of Nursery life.
- The children's education is enriched by the excellent liaison with the local community.
- Close working relationships with pre-school and primary schools promotes smooth transfers.

### **Commentary**

31. Links with parents are excellent because the Nursery views the parents as one of its greatest assets and provides substantial support for them in many ways. Parent time at the start of each session not only builds high quality relationships, but also makes parents fully involved in their children's education. The curriculum is shared in some detail; for example, the words for songs the children will learn and support materials are readily available. Through workshops, parents have gained an invaluable insight into teaching methods used in mathematics, reading and speech, enabling them to continue learning at home. The twice weekly lending library for children and parents or other relatives promotes books, mathematics and literacy games; educational computer discs are to be offered shortly. Parents praise the physical education bag loan system. The Nursery's website is especially useful for working parents.

32. Attendance at the mid year consultations is excellent, giving all parents the opportunity to discuss their child's progress, including strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the year, they also receive a copy of their child's profile. The profile pro-forma is detailed, but it was not possible to judge the quality of completed profiles as they had been passed to the primary schools.
33. Parents regularly help in class and on external visits; to ensure consistency throughout the Nursery they receive guidance, for example how to speak to the children. The school makes very good use of parental skills. For example, a professional chef helped children with their pancake making. All children are to benefit shortly from two parents who teach sign language, developing their understanding of people's differing needs. Parents' views are valued and they help the school in a wide range of ways. Shared teaching methods with local primaries, such as play-based teaching, and the sharing of children's profiles, enable smooth transition. Playgroup links are well established. Students in training are welcomed and the local college offers courses especially for parents.
34. Parents of children with special educational needs are very involved in their child's development. They are consulted on their child's individual education plan. Parents of children with more profound needs meet more regularly with the co-ordinator of the provision for children with special educational needs to discuss issues of concern. Questionnaires are sent to parents regularly, seeking their views on the provision for their child, and adults readily encourage parents to discuss their child's progress. Close links with the next schools often involve meeting, not only the new Reception teacher, but also the teacher with responsibility for special educational needs provision. This ensures each child transfers to the next school with their needs fully met.
35. Links with the community are extensive and include the local church, baker, the post office and senior citizens. The local library is especially supportive, offering space for the *Words on Wheels* bus and visiting weekly for story sessions. Writing and communication have been stimulated through the postman's annual visits when the children write letters and follow the journey they take to reach their destination. This long-standing arrangement has been recognised by an award from the Education and Business Partnership. The postman has been appointed as a member of the governing body in recognition of his commitment to the Nursery.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and the governance of the school is developing well. There is a very good focus on inclusion.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership.
- Data is analysed to enable progress to be well monitored.

### **Commentary**



36. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has led the school very effectively since the last inspection. The school uses very clear and detailed systems for self-evaluation and these give the leadership a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses. These are then used well to help set priorities for further improvement.
37. The teamwork between all adults in the school is very good and this has supported the very good improvement evident in all of the key issues raised in 1998. The members of staff are effective in providing for children of different abilities, and their work is monitored informally by the headteacher and subject leaders. The subject leaders audit their areas of responsibility regularly, through looking at resources and children's work. They do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor the delivery of the curriculum in practice.
38. The strategic planning is detailed and effective. The planning for the new building has taken up a lot of the headteacher's time and efforts over the past two years, but this has resulted in a very good new resource for the school. The current school improvement planning is well thought out and it contains appropriate priorities for the future development of the school.
39. The leadership and management of the provision for children with special educational needs, which are undertaken by the headteacher, are very good. She works closely with the part-time special needs assistant and other members of staff to ensure appropriate learning objectives are set and monitored effectively to meet individual needs. She regularly liaises with the local education authority specialist support teams and other outside agencies, to ensure all pupils are provided with the support they need. Information on children's progress is meticulously maintained. This includes identifying each child's needs, undertaking regular audits of need, monitoring success children make in their progress. This ensures that the school benefits from a staff team who are totally informed and involved in each child's development.
40. The school is well managed. The systems for performance management are effective and they have clearly resulted in improvements in provision. For example, the headteacher's annual objectives are reflected in those set with staff during their performance reviews. Because of performance management, improvements in resources and planning are evident. The school has identified that formal observations of teaching are not yet sufficiently part of this process and the inspectors agree; potentially, this may lead to a weakness in provision not being identified and addressed.
41. The governing body was formed in September 2003 and it only received a fully delegated budget from April 2004. Governors have received appropriate training to help them develop their role. They have made good use of the local authority finance services and they are able to monitor the progress of the budget on a regular basis. They work hard to ensure best value in all aspects of the school's work, but need to review spending more closely to assess the impact of their decisions. For example, the new building offers fresh opportunities and improved provision in a number of areas, but is too often unused at present to provide full value for money. The governors are aware that they rely too heavily on the headteacher for information and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. They appreciate that they need to be more active in holding the school to account. The governors' work is managed well through regular meetings and they have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Some governors have visited the school to assess provision in specific areas such as special educational needs and reading.

This is good practice and needs to be extended further. The high balance carried forward into 2004/2005 was part of the financing of the new room.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	338,005
Total expenditure	373,693
Expenditure per pupil	6,228

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,995
Balance carried forward to the next	5,307

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

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

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

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

- The children's achievement is very good.
- The relationships between all adults and children are very good.
- The children are happy and well settled.
- Children's independent skills are very well developed.

#### **Commentary**

42. From well below average standards on entry, children's achievement is very good over time, and most are on course to reach the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. Many of the children with special educational needs are also in-line with the standards normally found by the time they leave the Nursery.
43. Children's personal and social development remains a significant strength of the setting, as was seen at the time of the last inspection. This is, in large measure, due to the very good relationships which exist between all the adults and the children. They settle the children well into the routines. They support them at all times and are very attentive to every child's need. They continually interact with children, talking through every situation calmly and sensitively. This results in the children feeling secure, happy and interested in everything they do. Adults place emphasis on the development of personal and social skills throughout the child's time in the Nursery. This is particularly targeted in the autumn term when the children first enter the Nursery. This enables children to settle very quickly and approach new experiences confidently.
44. Children understand the rules of the setting, and at this stage in the year they behave appropriately together. They show care and concern for each other for living things and the environment. It is impressive to see how well children's independent skills have developed. They move around the setting purposefully, showing the ability to select activities which interest them. With very good adult monitoring and guidance, they are willing to manage new tasks and undertake new experiences.
45. Teaching by all of the adults is very good and this results in very good learning. Adults provide very good role models of 'fair play' and support a very caring ethos. They monitor children's development systematically and provide experiences which give opportunities for children to interact in pairs and groups, sharing resources and playing together. Adults lead most of the activities and this produces very good quality learning; encouraging concentration and helping children apply themselves well to the many activities available. Time spent in their smaller 'Story Groups' gives children a special relationship with one adult who gains a deeper understanding of the needs of the children in this group. It also provides opportunities for 'Circle Time' when issues such as 'sharing' and caring for others can be talked through sensitively. The children are encouraged and allowed to develop their individuality and independence and to

pursue their natural inclinations and interests. This is because of the well-planned curriculum and daily assessment of the children's needs.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's achievement is very good.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's communication and language skills.
- Skills are developed well through interesting and motivating first hand experiences.
- Members of staff make very good use of assessment information to move children's learning forward.

### Commentary

46. Children enter the Nursery with well below average standards. However, the members of staff respond very well to individual needs, and place emphasis on settling the children in, talking to them and encouraging them to respond. This results in children making very good progress, so that by the time they leave the setting they are on course to attain the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children with special educational needs also make very good progress in their learning from the time they start school.
47. Standards within the Nursery by the time children leave are not as high as those seen at the time of the last inspection. This is due to the change in the Nursery profile, with significantly more children entering with poor language skills. The staff work hard and progress made by the children is very good. Such progress is an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum remains rich and varied. The emphasis on speaking and listening through a very good range of stimulating experiences is beginning to impact positively on children's learning.
48. The adults emphasise the development of children's communication and language skills through every activity. They engage with the children in conversation, talking about what they are doing all the time, whether painting, colouring or in the role-play area. Adults model the language to be used, and ask questions of the children throughout. This was evident in the sessions with card games, when using the robotic toy, and when looking closely at newborn chicks. When making toast, the adult explained clearly what was happening and the children listened attentively and were eager to talk about which spread they wanted and what they enjoyed eating at home. By the time they leave the Nursery many children listen well and are confident to engage in conversation, not only with known adults, but also with visitors.
49. Children recognise text and its relevance is well promoted. All the children can recognise their names, and collect their name badges quickly at the start of the session. The Nursery walls are full of stimulating displays and children are encouraged to enjoy books. In the smaller 'Story Groups' adults share books with the children each day. Children are using rhythm and repetition to join in as familiar words appear, such as "*Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum*" when reading 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Children are also able to listen to stories and recall simple facts, particularly about characters and events. Children are developing their vocabulary through non-fiction books, such as the Broad Bean, learning words such as shoot and root.

50. The good quality first-hand experiences and the emphasis on speaking and listening are beginning to impact on children's writing. The visit involving mini-beasts was very stimulating and children eagerly made marks on paper to say something about the visit. More able children are beginning to use recognisable letters, and some are writing clearly when copying beneath the adults' writing. Children often choose to write, such as in the 'Office'. All children are encouraged to hold pencils accurately and good co-ordination is being developed.
51. The support given to children who have specific needs is very good. Where children find communication difficult and have speech and language difficulties, very effective one-to-one and small group targeted activities are put into place to support them. Speech, language and the use of vocabulary are developed from very stimulating card games with the special needs assistant. Teaching is very good. All adults work hard at providing motivating activities and spend time talking with the children. They use very good assessment procedures enabling them to track achievement and guide future learning.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**. The children achieve very well and, although current standards are broadly typical, this represents very good progress from the well below average level of attainment on entry to the school. The substantial majority of the children are on course to attain the relevant national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn mathematical skills through a wide range of well-planned activities.
- The quality of the teaching is very good and teaching assistants offer excellent support.
- There is very good provision for higher attaining children.

### **Commentary**

52. The provision in mathematical development has improved greatly since the last inspection. Achievement is very good and this is due to the very effective teaching, improved resources and leadership than was evident at the time of the last inspection. When children enter the school many of them have well below average levels of attainment. They make very good progress so that by the time they leave they are broadly on target to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception year.
53. Very good use is made of songs and rhymes to develop children's mathematical skills. They know and can sing a wide range of traditional and modern counting rhymes. Children learn to program a floor robot and the teacher cleverly uses this as an opportunity to use a dice to decide how far the robot should move. This means children have to count the dots on the dice and then learn to recognise the numeral on the robot in order to complete the task successfully. The teacher also changes the level of her questioning about the numbers and the amount of help to offer the children depending on their prior learning and skill level.
54. The teaching is very good. The members of staff have very good relationships with the children, and this helps develop the evident very good attitudes towards their work.

Very good records are kept to show which children participate in which activities. The work is assessed very carefully and a termly assessment is used to set appropriate targets for future learning. The teaching assistants are very effectively deployed and their excellent questioning skills ensure that children make very good progress whoever they are working with. All adults know the children well and are aware of their prior learning and levels of attainment.

55. The members of staff provide a very good range of activities for children and these extend their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. Children learn to sort and sequence objects using colour and size. They use number lines to teach numbers to ten and colourful toys for sorting activities. Children have good opportunities to compare the mass of different objects using balances. Throughout this work, the members of staff are careful to ensure that children use and get familiar with the correct mathematical terminology.
56. The school provides higher attaining children with very good opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge through more focused direct teaching. A small group of children who have made above average progress throughout the first two terms are grouped together for a series of extension lessons with the subject co-ordinator. This is very good provision and leads to the children starting in Reception classes with a very good knowledge and understanding of basic number skills.
57. This area of learning is very well led by the subject co-ordinator. She has worked hard to improve standards since taking on the role. The school now has a very good, effective system for assessing children's achievement. This is well linked to the nationally agreed early learning goals for children of this age. Planning and resources have improved; this includes the planning for a week of mathematical activities using the outdoor areas. The governors have not yet monitored children's mathematical learning in any detail.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is very good.
- The very good curriculum is based on an investigative approach with a range of motivating first hand experiences.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall and excellent for scientific activities.
- Provision for information and communication technology is excellent, particularly the use of the interactive whiteboard.

### **Commentary**

58. When children enter the Nursery, they have a knowledge and understanding of the world around them which is below that normally found. They make very good progress over the year in Nursery and the majority are likely to attain the national goals by the end of the Reception year. The change in the profile of children in the Nursery over the last few years means that children are making more progress now than was seen at the last inspection. There are more children with special educational needs and

these children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world during their time in the Nursery.

59. Children talk about their homes and families and are gaining an understanding of events in the past and the present. Their knowledge and skills in areas of science are excellent, particularly their interest in the environment around them. The rangers from Lickey Hills visit school to give children a deeper understanding of the plant and animal life around them. The whole ethos of the Nursery is for the children to learn from good quality first-hand experiences. This is provided through visitors with expertise in different areas, and from experiences within and around the Nursery environment. Newborn chicks fascinate the children, as they watch and hold them. They see how creatures develop, for example the tadpoles into frogs. These experiences are used well to develop children's skills in other areas of learning, such as speaking and listening, writing and mathematics. The outdoor accommodation has been particularly well planned over the last few years to enable children to explore. The sensory garden encourages them to identify different herbs by smell, texture and the shape of the leaves.
60. The children also make excellent progress in the development of knowledge and skills when using information and communication technology. Young children can control the mouse to move images on the screen. They program a robot to move across the floor. They are most impressive when using the interactive whiteboards. They use the 'pen' with confidence and enthusiasm to select the correct tools and draw insects accurately. The research undertaken with Birmingham University has significantly enhanced provision in this area of learning. Children like, and are successful in, making things. They confidently screw together pieces when playing with construction equipment. They confidently stick and join paper. They learn about making toast and develop life-skills for the future.
61. Teaching and learning are very good. Members of staff do not miss opportunities to help children achieve, even those activities which are child selected rather than adult-led. Activities motivate the children, and staff work hard preparing them. Whilst children have a free choice in selecting activities, staff monitor this very closely to ensure no experience is missed. Detailed records and ongoing notes are kept by staff on each child's progress.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The provision for physical development is **good** and has improved since the last inspection. The children achieve very well and the substantial majority of them are well on course to attain the relevant national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very good provision for children to develop skills using their hands with small tools and equipment.
- The outdoor areas and new classroom offer much improved opportunities for children to develop their physical abilities.

### **Commentary**



62. Achievement is good and the majority of the children are on target to achieve the agreed early learning goals by the end of their Reception year. Few pupils with special educational needs have difficulties with their physical development. Those that do are appropriately supported and encouraged. There are no differences in achievement or attainment between any of the minority ethnic groups or between boys and girls. The teaching is very good and the members of staff make full use of the outdoor sessions as a learning opportunity. Access to the outside hinders the school using the outdoors as a child-initiated activity. However, having all children out side at the same time means that the space and the choice is more limited than if this facility was available in a more flexible way.
63. The school provides a very wide range of activities that enable children to use their hands with different tools such as scissors and pencils, different materials and media. This they do with growing skill. During the inspection this was evident in the use of a variety of creative activities using paints, pencils, soft modelling materials, and scissors creating collages, pictures and models. Other children used cork, plastic shapes, hammers and nails to create patterns. This work required a great deal of care and attention to what they were doing.
64. The new room recently completed, and the resources purchased to support this area, have enabled the school to improve its provision for physical development to a good extent. This is now used occasionally for sessions involving movement or the use of sporting equipment to help develop children's gymnastic and physical skills. The use of this room is at an early stage and opportunities are missed to ensure its more regular use.
65. The outdoor area was a weakness at the last inspection. Since then, a great deal of work has been done to develop the facilities for children's outdoor activities. Climbing frames, an adventure play area and willow tunnel support children developing the confidence to move and use their bodies with developing skill and accuracy. A very wide range of fixed and portable equipment, large and small, is provided and used effectively to provide consistently good challenge. There is extensive opportunity to explore movement by climbing over, under, through and round the equipment.
66. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good opportunities for children to experience early games skills such as throwing at targets, using hockey sticks and balls. In one good session, children learned to co-operate and work together to control a ball on a parachute activity. Most children use the larger apparatus such as wheeled toys with confidence and enjoyment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**. The children achieve well and a substantial majority of them are well on course to exceed the relevant national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is very good with a wide variety of opportunities provided for children. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The members of staff provide a variety of opportunities for children to experience a range of materials and media.
- The quality of the work is often above that normally found given children's ages.

- The school provides a lot of opportunities for children to work and play imaginatively.
- There is too little use of the new room for dance and imaginative movement.

## Commentary

67. Children achieve well and make very good progress from their attainment on entry to the school. The majority are currently on line to exceed the agreed early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. There are no significant boy/girl differences in achievement, or between different abilities or ethnic backgrounds due to the good support provided. The resources are very good and members of staff prepare a wide range of creative activities.
68. The teaching is very good, including the work of the teaching assistants, and is well supported by other adults. In two sessions, children had very good opportunities to create pictures and patterns using bubble paint and string. These activities were well led and this meant that very good opportunities were found to develop children's concentration, and speaking and listening, as well as their creative skills.
69. Other creative activities give children the chance to experiment with paint, crayons, chinks, collage, printing, recycled materials and soft modelling media. The good staff ratio means that children can receive a lot of adult support. Displays of the children's work shows that they do their best almost all of the time, practising a range of skills. One very effective piece of work resulted from observational paintings of fruit. There is evidence of work from different cultures being used to inspire creativity. For example, for the Chinese New Year children helped make a lion head mask and they created music to accompany its movement.
70. An outside teacher with specific musical expertise leads music sessions for all children. These sessions are very popular, and provide opportunities for observing and using a range of instruments, particularly percussion. In addition, computer software is used to give children opportunities to compose their own tunes, and create their own sound effects. The use of percussion and keyboard instruments as tabletop activities also extends children's experiences of music. However, music was rarely played during the inspection period and it could be used more to enhance the ethos and appreciation of music throughout the school. Movement and dance activities are planned but none were provided during the inspection, and this work could usefully be extended and planned on a more regular basis.
71. Children have very good opportunities to gather in small groups on a daily basis and to sing and recite a wide range of songs, rhymes and poems. This they do with enjoyment and enthusiasm, joining in well and singing a wide range of modern and traditional songs, often with actions. There are good links with their mathematical development through numbers rhymes involving counting, and to their knowledge and understanding of the world topic by singing about frogs. There are missed opportunities to listen to a range of music from different cultures and styles, and this would help widen the children's breadth of knowledge.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
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	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	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	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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